

# PD LITERATURE

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# TARTUFFE OR THE HYPOCRITE

Moliere (Jean-Baptiste Poquelin) 1622-1673

Translated by Jeffrey D. Hoeper

## ACT I

### SCENE I

Madame Pernelle and her servant Flipote, Elmire, Mariane, Dorine, Damis, Cleante

Mme. Pernelle. Let's go, Flipote, let's go. I hate this place.

Elmire. I can't keep up, you rush at such a pace.

Mme. Pernelle. Peace, my dear, peace; come no farther.

I don't wish to cause you any bother.

Elmire. What duty demands, I insist on giving.

But, mother, what has caused your hasty leaving?

Mme. Pernelle. I just can't stand the way your household runs . . .

And no one cares what I wish to have done.

Oh, yes, I leave your household quite dissatisfied

For all my wise advice has been defied . . .

And nobody respects me, and everybody shouts,

And truly this is a home for the king of louts!

Dorine. If . . .

Mme. Pernelle. You, my dearie, are a bold lassy,

A little brazen and very sassy,

You butt into everything to speak your mind.

Damis. But . . .

Mme. Pernelle. You, grandson, are a fool of the worst kind.

It is I, your grandmother, that pronounce this edict

And to my son, your father, I have oft predicted

That you'll turn out to be a worthless wastrel,

And give him in life a foretaste of Hell.

Mariane. I think . . .

Mme. Pernelle. My lord, his sister! You seem so discreet

And so untainted, so very sweet,

But the stillest waters are filled with scum,

And your sly ways earn my revulsion.

Elmire. But . . .

Mme. Pernelle. Daughter, my views may make you mad,

But your conduct in all things is all bad.

In your family's eyes you should be an example-setter;

In that respect their late mother did far better.

You are extravagant, and it wounds me, I guess,

To see you sashay about dressed like a princess.

A woman who wishes only to please her mate,

Dear daughter, need not primp and undulate.  
Cleante. Madam, after all . . .

Mme. Pernelle. And her brother, as for you,  
I respect you, love you, and revere you, too,  
But finally, if I were my son, her spouse,  
I would at once beg you to leave this house.  
Without cease you teach your rules and mottos  
Which decent people should never follow.  
I now speak frankly, but it is my part;  
I never spare the words that stir my heart.

Damis. Your man Tartuffe is satisfied, no fear . . .

Mme. Pernelle. He is a holy man whom all should hear,  
And I cannot bear, without great rue,  
To hear him mocked by a fool like you.

Damis. What? Am I myself to bear a carping critic,  
A base usurper with a power tyrannic,  
Such that we can do nothing for diversion  
Without hearing about that creep's aversion?

Dorine. If we were to hear and obey his whims,  
We couldn't do anything without sins  
For he forbids all, this false Capuchin.

Mme. Pernelle. And everything he forbids is well forbidden.  
He strives to guide you on the road to heaven,  
And it's my son's duty to make you love him.

Damis. No, grandma, neither dad nor anyone else  
Can oblige me to wish for his good health.  
I'd be false to myself if I didn't say this:  
When I see him around, I begin to get pissed.  
I can smell the outcome, and soon this coot,  
And I will find ourselves in a grand dispute.

Dorine. It's certainly a clear cause for remark  
When a nobody acts like a patriarch,  
A beggar who was barefoot when he came hence  
And whose whole wardrobe wasn't worth two cents!  
And he's gone so far as to forget his past for  
He opposes everything and plays the master.

Mme. Pernelle. Ah! mercy on me! Things would be better,  
If you'd only follow his holy orders.

Dorine. He passes for a saint in your fantasy,  
But, I swear, he acts with hypocrisy.

Mme. Pernelle. Watch your tongue!

Dorine. Not to him nor his man Laurent  
Would I trust my honor without good warrant.

Mme. Pernelle. I don't know what his servant's like at heart,  
But for the man himself, I'll guarantee his part.  
You only treat him with hate and aversion

Because he truly strives for your conversion.  
He hurls his heart up against each sin  
And the glory of God is all he hopes to win.

Dorine. Yes. But why, especially during some  
Time past, must he ban all guests from our home?  
Can a courtesy call offend Heaven  
Enough to merit a huge commotion?  
Would you like it explained, just between us? [Gesturing toward Elmire.]  
Of Madam there, on my oath, he's jealous!

Mme. Pernelle. Be quiet, and think before you speak.  
Others, too, condemn the company you keep.  
All this bustle from the people who arrive,  
The carriages ceaselessly parking at curb-side,  
And the servants in a circle chattering,  
Make noise that your neighbors find nerve-shattering.  
I'd like to think there's no harm meant,  
But when gossips talk, they're malevolent.

Cleante. How can you hope to stop people talking?  
It would truly be most irritating  
If, for the sake of idle, foolish chatter,  
We must renounce the friends that really matter.  
And even if we could resolve to do it,  
How could you hope to keep the whole world quiet?  
No castle wall can defend against lies,  
So let's ignore the fools who criticize,  
And strive to live in innocence and ease,  
Letting gossips gossip as they please.

Dorine. Daphne, our neighbor, and her petty spouse--  
Weren't they the ones who slandered this house?  
Those whom the whole world finds ridiculous  
Are always first in line to stick it to us.  
They never fail to sniff out and swiftly share  
The earliest rumor of a love affair,  
Sowing seeds of scandal with eager expedition  
And twisting truth past all recognition.  
In their own colors, they paint all others,  
Brazenly calling all men their brothers;  
In the faint hope of finding some resemblance,  
They try to give a gloss of innocence  
To their schemes or to make others share  
The burden of blame that is only theirs.

Mme. Pernelle. All this hair-splitting is off the subject.  
Orante lives a life that is perfect  
With all her thoughts on heaven, and I hear  
That she deeply mourns the way you live here.

Dorine. The lady herself is quite an example!

You want a chaste life? She's a nice sample.  
But old age has stuck her in this zealous mood,  
And everyone knows she's a reluctant prude.  
'Cause as long as she could snare a man's heart,  
She was more than willing to play her part.  
But now that her eyes have lost their luster,  
She leaves the world that already left her  
And uses a pompous veil of phony wisdom  
To hide the fact that her looks are gone.  
It's the last resort of the aging flirt,  
So peeved at having no man at her skirt  
That, alone and abandoned to solitude,  
Her only recourse is to become a prude.  
And these good women censure all with such  
Great severity; nor do they pardon much.  
They biliously blame immorality  
Not from charity, but only from envy  
That others are drinking in that pleasure  
From which old age now drains their measure.

Mme. Pernelle [to Elmire]. Such idle tales form a silly song.

In your home, my dear, I've been silenced too long  
Because, like a crap-shooter with the die,  
Madame won't give up her turn; but now my  
Chance has come. I applaud my son's great wisdom  
In opening his home to this holy person  
Who's been heaven-sent to meet your needs  
In turning from evil to God's holy deeds.  
For your soul's salvation, please pay attention:  
What he reprehends, merits reprehension.  
These visits, these balls, these conversations  
Are flawless signs of Satanic possession.  
In them you never hear the holy Credo--  
Just songs, chatter, gossip, malice, and innuendo.  
Often the neighbors get stabbed to the heart  
By vicious lies from the third or fourth part.  
So good people suffer real anxiety  
From the sad confusion spread at your party.  
A slew of slanders are spread along the way  
And, as a doctor told me the other day,  
This is truly the Tower of Babylon  
Because everyone babbles on and on;  
And, to tell a story that now comes to mind . . .  
Now look at him and how he laughs! [Indicating Cleante.] Go find  
Some snickering fools. They are just your kind!  
[To Elmire.] Adieu, my daughter. I'll say no more.  
But I don't intend to darken your door

For a long, long time. You've fallen from grace.  
[Slapping Flipote.] Hurry up, there! Don't stand staring into space!  
Lord Almighty! I'll slap your silly face.  
Go on, you slut, go on.

## SCENE II

Cleante, Dorine

Cleante. I'm not following;  
I'm sure there'd only be more quarrelling.  
How that old harridan . . .

Dorine. Oh, how I regret  
That she can't hear you use that epithet.  
She'd tell you at length what she thinks of your wit,  
And that she's not old enough to merit it.

Cleante. What a fuss she made about nearly nothing!  
And what a passion for Tartuffe, her darling!

Dorine. Oh! Really, she's normal compared to her son,  
And if you could see him, you'd say, "Here's one  
Who's nuts!" During the war, he seemed quite sage,  
And in serving his prince, showed some courage,  
But now he's become an absolute fool  
Since he gave himself up to Tartuffe's rule.  
He calls him his brother and the love of his life--  
More dear than mother, daughter, son, or wife.  
He's the sole confidant of all his secrets  
And the sole director of all his projects.  
He caresses him, kisses him, and could not show a mistress  
More love and affection than he gives to this  
Leech. At dinner he gives him the highest place  
And watches with joy as he stuffs his face  
With cakes and tarts and often the best part  
Of a pig, and if he should happen to hiccup or fart,  
Says, "God be with you!" He's mad about him--  
His honey, his hero. He always quotes him  
And admires his deeds. His smallest acts are miracles  
And even his stupidest words are oracles.  
Tartuffe, who uses his dupe to make a buck,  
Knows a hundred wily ways to pluck this duck;  
He rakes off great sums with his biblical bull  
And demands the right to censor us all.  
His foolish footman has such presumption  
That even he dares to give us instruction.  
Madly preaching, he scatters with eyes afire  
Our ribbons, our rouge, and our best attire.  
Last night he ripped up with his own bare hands

A kerchief left lying in The Holy Lands,  
Claiming our crime was truly gigantic  
In mixing what's holy with what's Satanic.

### SCENE III

Elmire, Mariane, Damis, Cleante, Dorine

Elmire [to Cleante]. You should be glad you missed the dreadful chore  
Of attending her lecture beside the door--  
Here comes my spouse! Since he doesn't see me,  
I'm going upstairs to rest quietly.

Cleante. Then I'll remain with no pleasure on my part  
To tell him hello and then quickly depart.

Damis. Ask him about the marriage of Mariane.  
I think Tartuffe will oppose it if he can,  
For he sets up so many prerequisites,  
And you know what an interest I take in it.  
The heat that inflames my sister and Valere  
Has made his sweet sister so very dear  
To me that if . . .

Dorine. Shh, he's here.

### SCENE IV

Orgon, Cleante, Dorine

Orgon. Hello, brother!

Cleante. I'm glad you've returned before my departure.  
The countryside isn't quite blossoming yet.

Orgon. Dorine . . . One second brother, please! Just let  
Me set my heart at ease and soothe my fear  
Concerning the things that have happened here. [To Dorine.]  
For these past two days, how have things gone on?  
What has happened? And how is everyone?

Dorine. The first day your wife had a bad fever  
And a headache that just wouldn't leave her.

Orgon. And Tartuffe?

Dorine. Tartuffe? He's in splendid shape,  
Fat and flabby, with red lips, and a shining face.

Orgon. Poor fellow!

Dorine. That night, your wife felt so sick  
And so feverish that she could only pick  
At her dinner and scarcely ate a bite.

Orgon. And Tartuffe?

Dorine. He alone ate with all his might,  
And devoutly devoured a pair of pheasants  
And a leg of lamb in our lady's presence.

Orgon. Poor fellow!

Dorine.                   The whole night passed before she  
    Could even close her eyes to fall asleep;  
    Shivers and chills beset her in bed,  
    And right up till dawn we watched her with dread.

Orgon. And Tartuffe?

Dorine.                   Drowsy from all that he'd consumed,  
    He left the table, went straight to his room,  
    And fell quickly into his nice, warm sack  
    Where he slept all night flat on his back.

Orgon. Poor fellow.

Dorine.                   At last your wife began heeding  
    Our good advice that she needed bleeding,  
    And she began to recover soon thereafter.

Orgon. And Tartuffe?

Dorine.                   He couldn't have been any better.  
    To fortify himself against every ill  
    And to regain the blood that Madam spilled,  
    He drank at brunch four great glasses of wine.

Orgon. Poor fellow!

Dorine.                   Both of them are now quite fine;  
    I'll now be going up to tell your wife  
    Of your deep concern at this threat to her life.

## SCENE V

Orgon, Cleante

Cleante. She's making fun of you to your face, brother;  
    And, though I don't intend to be a bother,  
    I must frankly admit that there's some justice  
    In what she says. What a crazy caprice  
    You have for him! And how could he exert  
    Such charm that you'll even let your wife be hurt?  
    After taking this pauper into your heart,  
    You go so far . . .

Orgon.                   Stop there! Or we must part!  
    You don't know the man to whom you refer.

Cleante. Okay. Say I don't know him if you prefer,  
    But then to know what sort of man he might be . . .

Orgon. Brother, you'd be charmed if you could only see  
    Him, and your glee would be . . . gargantuan!  
    He's a man who . . . who . . . a man . . . well, a man!  
    Learn from him a peacefulness most exquisite,  
    That lets you drop your woes like . . . dried horseshit!  
    Yes, I've been reborn because of his preaching:  
    He teaches me that I shouldn't love anything,



From every earthly passion he has freed my life;  
I'd watch my brother, mother, children, and wife  
Drop dead without caring so much as that! [He snaps his fingers.]

Cleante. You've sure got humane sentiments down pat!

Orgon. Ah! If you'd seen him as I did at first,  
Your eyes would have feasted on him with a spiritual thirst!  
Each day he came to church smiling with sweet peace  
And threw himself down before me on both knees.  
He drew upon himself the eyes of everyone there  
By the holy fervor of his pious prayer.  
He sighed and wept with a most saintly passion  
And humbly kissed the earth in a fetching fashion;  
And when I was going, he rushed out front  
To bless me with water from the holy font.  
His servant (matching his master to a T)  
Then informed me of his identity--  
And his poverty. So I made a donation,  
But then he tried to return a portion.  
"It's too much," he said. "You're too generous;  
I don't merit your pity and kindness."  
And when I refused to take it back, he gave  
It in alms to the poor right there in the nave.  
Then God bade me take him into my home  
And now life is sweet as a honeycomb.  
He governs us all, and to protect my honor  
Bids my wife grant his godly rule upon her.  
He forewarns me of men who might give her the eye,  
And he really seems far more jealous than I!  
Why, you wouldn't believe his fear of Hell!  
He thinks himself damned for the least bagatelle.  
Such trifles suffice to scandalize him  
That he even accused himself of sin  
For having slain with a bit too much wrath  
A flea that just happened to cross his path.

Cleante. My goodness, brother! I think you're crazy!

Are you mocking me with sheer lunacy?

And how can you pretend that this pure rot . . . ?

Orgon. Dear brother, your words reek of that free thought  
With which I find you more than a bit impeached,  
And, as ten times or more I have clearly preached,  
You will soon find yourself in a wicked bind.

Cleante. Now this is the normal jargon of your kind.  
They want everyone to be as blind as they are.  
To be clear-sighted, is to be in error,  
And one who rejects their vain hypocrisy  
Has no respect for faith or sanctity.

Go on, all your tart sermons scarcely smart;  
I know what I'm saying, and God sees my heart.  
I'm not a slave to your silly ceremony.  
There is false piety like false bravery;  
Just as one often sees, when honor calls us,  
That the bravest men never make the most fuss,  
So, too, the good Christians, whom one should follow,  
Are not those who find life so hard to swallow.  
What now? Will you not make any distinction  
Between hypocrisy and true devotion?  
Would you wish to use the same commonplace  
To describe both a mere mask and a true face?  
To equate artifice with sincerity  
Is to confound appearance and reality.  
To admire a shadow as much as you do  
Is to prefer counterfeit money to true.  
The majority of men are strangely made!  
And their true natures are rarely displayed.  
For them the bounds of reason are too small;  
In their shabby souls they love to lounge and sprawl.  
And very often they spoil a noble deed  
By their urge for excess and reckless speed.  
But all this, brother, is idle chatter.

Orgon. Without doubt you are a renowned teacher;  
With all the world's knowledge in your coffer.  
You're the only oracle, the wisest sage,  
The enlightened one, the Cato of our age;  
And next to you, all other men are dumb.

Cleante. Brother, I know I'm not the wisest one  
Nor the most learned man in Christendom  
But in moral matters my greatest coup  
Is to differentiate false from true.  
And since I know of no heroes about  
More to be praised than the truly devout  
And nothing at all with greater appeal  
Than the holy fervor of saintly zeal,  
So too nothing could be more odious  
Than the white-washed face of a zeal that's specious,  
Or these frank charlatans, seeking places,  
Whose false and sacrilegious double faces  
Exploit our love of God and make a game  
Of our reverence for Christ's holy name.  
These people who, with a shop-keeper's soul,  
Make cheap trinkets to trade on the Credo,  
And hope to purchase credit and favor  
Bought with sly winks and affected fervor;

These people, I say, whose uncommon hurry  
On the path to Heaven leads through their treasury,  
Who, writhing and praying, demand a profit each day  
And call for a Retreat while pocketing their pay,  
Who know how to tally their zeal with their vices,--  
Faithless, vindictive, full of artifices--  
To ruin someone they'll conceal their resentment  
With a capacious cloak of Godly contentment.  
They are doubly dangerous in their vicious ire  
Because they destroy us with what we admire,  
And their piety, which gains them an accolade,  
Is a tool to slay us with a sacred blade.  
There are many men in this false disguise,  
But those with pure hearts are easy to recognize.  
Our age, my friend, has brought into plain sight  
Many glorious examples of what is right.  
Look at Ariston, or Periandre,  
Oronte, Alcidamus, or Clitandre;  
Their title is one that all agree to.  
They decline any fanfare for their virtue;  
They don't indulge in vain ostentation;  
Their humane faith finds form in moderation;  
They never censure all of our actions,  
For they sense the vain pride in such transactions.  
And, leaving boastful rhetoric to others,  
By their own actions they reprove their brothers.  
The appearance of evil is no concern of theirs;  
They cast the best light on others' affairs.  
They plot no intrigues; seek no one to fleece;  
Their only concern is to live at peace.  
They don't seek to cause any sinner chagrin;  
Their abhorrence is directed only at sin.  
And they don't take the side of God more extremely  
Than God himself--who could act supremely!  
These are my models, and these are their ways;  
Such examples are the ones that most merit praise.  
But your man, in truth, is not made from such steel.  
In good faith, perhaps, you praise his great zeal,  
But I think you're dazed by his meaningless  
Glitter.

Orgon. Dear brother-in-law, are you finished?

Cleante. Yes.

Orgon. Your humble servant. [He begins to leave.]

Cleante. Pardon me. One word, brother.

Let's drop this discussion. You know that Valere  
Has your word that he'll be Mariane's spouse.

Orgon. Yes.  
Cleante. And you've announced this fact in your house.  
Orgon. That is true.  
Cleante. Then why postpone the event?  
Orgon. I don't know.  
Cleante. Do you intend to recant?  
Orgon. Perhaps.  
Cleante. How could you go back on your word?  
Orgon. I didn't say I would.  
Cleante. I hope no absurd  
Hitch could make you retract your own promise.  
Orgon. We'll see.  
Cleante. Why do you speak with such finesse?  
Valere sent me to ask you this verbatim.  
Orgon. Praise God!  
Cleante. But what shall I report to him?  
Orgon. What you please.  
Cleante. But it is essential  
To know your plans. What are they?  
Orgon. To do all  
That God wishes.  
Cleante. Stick to the point. I know  
Your promise. Will you keep it? Yes, or no?  
Orgon. Farewell.  
Cleante. I fear his promise will be withdrawn,  
So I'd better report what's going on.

## ACT II

### SCENE I

Orgon, Mariane

Orgon. Mariane.  
Mariane. Yes.  
Orgon. Come here. We need to speak  
Privately.  
Mariane. Father, what is it you seek?  
Orgon [looking in the closet]. I'm seeing if anyone can overhear us.  
This is a perfect place for such a purpose.  
There now, it's okay. Mariane, I find  
You endowed with a heart that's sweet and kind  
And you have always been most dear to me.  
Mariane. A father's love brings true felicity.  
Orgon. Well said, my child! And to earn it fully  
You should devote yourself to contenting me.

Mariane. That's how my devotion is put to the proof.

Orgon. Good. Now what do you think of our guest, Tartuffe?

Mariane. Who me?

Orgon. You. Think well before you reply.

Mariane. Oh my! Tell me what to say . . . and I'll comply.

[Dorine enters quietly and hides herself behind Orgon without being seen.]

Orgon. That's sensibly spoken. Now tell me, girl,  
That his merit shines like a gleaming pearl,  
That he warms your heart, and that you would rejoice  
To have him be your husband by my choice.  
Eh?

[Mariane recoils in dismay.]

Mariane. Eh?

Orgon. What's that?

Mariane. Please?

Orgon. What?

Mariane. Am I in error?

Orgon. Why?

Mariane. Whom do you wish that I should now swear  
Touches my heart--and who would rejoice me  
If we joined, by your choice, in matrimony?

Orgon. Tartuffe.

Mariane. Out of the question, father, I assure  
You! Why urge on me such an imposture?

Orgon. But, my dear, I wish it to be true,  
And it should be enough that I've chosen for you.

Mariane. What? Father, would you . . .?

Orgon. Yes, I intend, you see  
To unite in marriage Tartuffe and my family.  
He will be your husband. I do declare it!  
Since you have promised . . .

## SCENE II

Dorine, Orgon, Mariane

Orgon [perceiving Dorine]. What do you stare at?  
You must be eaten up with curiosity  
To eavesdrop on my daughter and me.

Dorine. I don't know whether the rumor I hear  
Is sly conjecture or a wicked smear;  
But I've just heard word of this marriage,  
And I trust it is only verbiage.

Orgon. Why? Is the idea itself so very absurd?

Dorine. I wouldn't believe it, sir, if you gave your word!

Orgon. I will make you believe it by-and-by.

Dorine. Yes. You're going to tell us a bald-faced lie.

Orgon. I am only saying what you will soon see.

Dorine. Nonsense!

Orgon. What I say, dear girl, will soon be.

Dorine. Go on. Don't believe him! It's too bizarre!

He's joking.

Orgon. I say . . .

Dorine. No, you've gone too far,

And no one believes you.

Orgon. Damn you, you shrew . . .

Dorine. Well, I believe you then; the worse for you.

What? Monsieur, can you pose as one who's sage,

Gravely stroking your bearded visage?

And still be fool enough to wish . . .

Orgon. Hear me!

I have given you too much liberty,

And it no longer gives me any pleasure.

Dorine. Monsieur, please. Keep your anger within measure.

Are you mocking us with your silly plot?

Your daughter is no match for a bigot;

He has other schemes to worry about.

And what would you gain if she wed this lout?

With your wealth, what benefit would it bring

To pick a bum . . .

Orgon. Ssh! Say he has nothing;

For that reason, you should revere him the more.

He is a holy man and nobly poor.

It raises him up to greater grandeur

That he has renounced all wealth by his pure

Detachment from the merely temporal

And his powerful love for the Eternal.

But my assistance may give him the means

To restore his lands and remove his liens.

He is a man of repute in the land of his birth,

And, even as he is, he's a man of worth.

Dorine. Yes, so he tells us, but his vanity

Does not sit so well with true piety.

A man pleased with a simple sanctity

Needn't vaunt his name and his dignity,

And the humility born of devotion

Suffers beneath such blatant ambition.

What good is his pride? . . . But perhaps I digress:

Let's speak of the man--not his nobleness.

Can you bestow, without feeling like a rat,  
A girl like this on a man like that?  
And shouldn't you think of propriety  
And foresee the end with anxiety?  
We know that some girls cannot remain chaste  
If their husband's tush is not to their taste,  
And that the best-laid plans for an honest life  
Are somewhat easier for the best-laid wife,  
And that many a man with a horned head  
Has driven his wife to another man's bed.  
It is entirely too much to ask  
That a wife be faithful to a flabby ass.  
And one who gives a girl to a man she hates  
Is guilty before God for all her mistakes.  
Consider the perils you expose yourself to.

Orgon. So you think I should learn how to live from you!

Dorine. You could do worse than follow my lead.

Orgon. Dear daughter, do drop this maid's daffy creed;

I know what's best for you in this affair.

It's true I betrothed you to young Valere,

But I hear he likes his dicing and drinking

And even worse is inclined to free-thinking.

I note with regret we don't see him at mass.

Dorine. Must he be there the same moment you pass

Like those who attend only to be seen?

Orgon. Your advice isn't wanted. Don't intervene.

Tartuffe is on the path to salvation,

And that is a treasure past calculation.

This wedding will bring blessings beyond measure,

And be crowned with great sweetness and pleasure.

Together you will live, thriving on love

Like new-born babes, or a pair of turtledoves.

You will never be found in angry debate

For you will find all that you wish in this mate.

Dorine. She'll only make him a cuckold, I'm sure.

Orgon. What?

Dorine. He looks just like a caricature,

And his fate, monsieur, will make him an ass

No matter how much virtue your daughter has.

Orgon. Don't interrupt me and remember your place

And quit sticking your nose up in my face!

Dorine. I'm only trying, sir, to protect you.

[Hereafter she always interrupts him at the moment he begins speaking to his daughter.]

Orgon. You're too kind, but do shut up--please do!

Dorine. If I didn't like you . . .

Orgon. I don't need liking.

Dorine. But I will like you, sir, despite your griping.

Orgon. Oh?

Dorine. Your honor is dear and I'd be provoked  
To find you the butt of some smutty joke.

Orgon. Can't you keep quiet?

Dorine. In all good conscience,  
It's a shame to foster such an alliance.

Orgon. Shut up, you viper, with your brazen traits . . .

Dorine. What? You've been reborn, yet you give way to hate?

Orgon. Yes, your twaddle has made me quite high-strung,  
And I now insist that you hold your tongue.

Dorine. All right. But I'll think in silence nonetheless.

Orgon. Think if you wish to, but strive for success  
At shutting your mouth . . . or beware. [Turning to his daughter] Let's see,  
I have weighed everything quite maturely.

Dorine [aside]. I hate this silence. [She falls quiet every time Orgon turns toward her.]

Orgon. Without being smug, I'll  
Say Tartuffe's face . . .

Dorine. Yes, he has a fine muzzle!

Orgon. Is so fine that even if you forgot  
His other traits . . .

Dorine [aside]. And they're a sorry lot!

[Orgon turns toward Dorine and, with his arms folded, listens while staring in her face.]

If I were in her place, most assuredly  
No man would wed me with impunity,  
And I'd prove to him right after the wedding  
That a wife's vengeance lies in the bedding!

Orgon [to Dorine]. So you refuse to obey me, is that true?

Dorine. What's your beef, sir? I'm not speaking to you.

Orgon. Then what are you doing?

Dorine. Soliloquizing.

Orgon. Very well. [aside] To give her a good chastising,  
I think she needs a taste of the back of my hand.

[He prepares to slap her, but each time Dorine sees him looking at her, she stands silent and erect.]

Child, you should approve of all I have planned . . .  
And have faith in the spouse . . . who's my designee.

[To Dorine.] Speak to yourself!

Dorine. I've nothing to say to me.



Orgon. Just one little word.

Dorine. I'm not in the mood.

Orgon. Because I was ready!

Dorine. What ineptitude!

Orgon. Now, daughter, let's see some obedience.

Accept my choice with complete deference.

Dorine [running away]. I'd thumb my nose at such a silly spouse.

[Orgon tries to slap Dorine and misses.]

Orgon. Daughter, your maid is a pest and would arouse

Vice in a saint--she's an absolute shrew!

I'm so upset that I can't continue.

Her taunts have nearly driven me to swear,

And I need to calm down in the open air.

### SCENE III

Dorine, Mariane

Dorine. Have you entirely lost your voice and heart?

Why must I continue playing your part?

To think you allow such a mad proposal

Without voicing even a meek refusal!

Mariane. How can I resist such a harsh patriarch?

Dorine. By any means! Don't be an easy mark!

Mariane. But how?

Dorine. Tell him you can't love on command,  
That you marry for yourself, not by demand,  
And since you are most concerned in these affairs  
You'll choose for yourself the sire of his heirs,  
And that, if Tartuffe is so charming to him,  
He can wed him himself--if that's his whim.

Mariane. A father, I'm sure, has absolute power;  
Before him I can only cringe and cower.

Dorine. Use your head. Valere wants to tie the knot.  
Do you really love him, I ask--or not?

Mariane. Your injustice to me has a mortal sting!  
Dorine, how can you ask me such a thing?  
Haven't I poured out my whole soul to you,  
And don't you know yet that my love is true?

Dorine. How do I know that your heart echoes your voice  
And that this love is truly your own choice?

Mariane. Your doubts, Dorine, wrong me greatly;  
My real feelings are shown far too plainly.

Dorine. You love him then?

Mariane. Yes, with the strongest passion.

Dorine. And he seems to love you in the same fashion?

Mariane. I think so.

Dorine. And both of you burn equally  
For this union in marriage?

Mariane. Certainly.

Dorine. And about this other man, what's your intention?

Mariane. I'd die before I'd submit to coercion.

Dorine. Fine! I hadn't thought of that recourse.

Death would give you such a forcible divorce.

What an ingenious remedy! Geez!

I hate to hear such stupid ideas.

Mariane. Good Heavens! What a rotten mood you're in!

You have no pity for my pain, Dorine!

Dorine. I have no sympathy for foolishness

And those who meet a crisis with such weakness.

Mariane. But what do you want me to do? I was born frail.

Dorine. A woman in love needs a heart of steel.

Mariane. But haven't I kept it free for my lover

Whose task it is to win me from my father?

Dorine. What! If your father is a mad fanatic

Whose love for Tartuffe is completely lunatic

And who has blocked the match you are now bewailing,

Is your lover to be damned for failing?

Mariane. But am I to display how deeply I'm bitten

By rejecting Tartuffe like one who's love-smitten?

Am I, because of Valere's strength and beauty,

To renounce my modesty and duty?

And would you have me show my heart to all . . . ?

Dorine. No, no, not at all. I'm wrong to forestall

Your marriage to Tartuffe, and my defiance

Is apparent in barring that alliance.

What reason have I for my outrageous

Attempt to stop something so advantageous?

Tartuffe! Oh! Isn't he something to behold?

Surely Tartuffe is not made from such a mold,

If rightly viewed, as to make a person laugh;

'Twould be an honor to be his better half.

The whole world already crowns him with glory;--

Both in physique and character he's laudatory;

He has red ears and a florid, flushing face

With him for a mate you'd live in joyful grace.

Mariane. Dear God!

Dorine. What delight you will feel within

To know that you're wed to a man like him.

Mariane. Oh! Please stop talking, and show me the way

To avoid this marriage. I will obey,

You've said enough, and I'm ready to be led.

Dorine. No. A good daughter must obey her dad--

Even if he wishes her to make love  
To an ape. What are you complaining of?  
You will proceed to his little villa  
Where you will get your absolute fill of  
Uncles and cousins to be entertained.  
Right away you'll move among the most urbane  
Of hicks. First you will make some overture  
To the wives of the judge and the tax assessor,  
Who will kindly seat you on a folding chair.  
During Carnival, you may hope to have there  
A ball with two bagpipes for an orchestra  
And maybe some puppets and a tame gorilla.  
But if your husband . . .

Mariane. Oh! You're killing me.  
Please help me avoid this catastrophe.

Dorine. I am your servant.

Mariane. Oh! Dorine, mercy . . .

Dorine. To punish you, I ought to leave things be.

Mariane. My dear girl!

Dorine. No.

Mariane. If I declared my love . . .

Dorine. No. Tartuffe is your man; that's sure enough.

Mariane. You know that I've always trusted that you'd  
Help me . . .

Dorine. No. I'm sure you will be tartuffed.

Mariane. All right! Since my fate no longer moves you,  
Henceforth you may leave me alone and blue;  
From deep sorrow my heart will draw relief,  
And I know an absolute cure for my grief.

[She starts to leave.]

Dorine. Whoa! I'm not really angry. Come back,--do.  
In spite of everything, I pity you.

Mariane. If I'm to be the one you crucify,  
You'll see, Dorine, how quickly I shall die.

Dorine. Don't torture yourself. We can easily  
Block them. . . . But look! I think that's Valere I see.

#### SCENE IV

Valere, Mariane, Dorine

Valere. Gossip is singing a little ditty,  
My dear,--news to me and very pretty.

Mariane. What?

Valere. That you will marry Tartuffe.

Mariane. It's true  
That my father has such a plan in view.

Valere. Your father . . .

Mariane. Has altered his inclination.

Through him, all this has come to my attention.

Valere. What? Seriously?

Mariane. Yes, seriously.

He wants this wedding--quite decidedly!

Valere. And how does your heart respond to this plan,  
Madam?

Mariane. I don't know.

Valere. Your response is plain.

You don't know?

Mariane. No.

Valere. No?

Mariane. What do you recommend?

Valere. I recommend that you accept this husband.

Mariane. You recommend that?

Valere. Yes.

Mariane. Really?

Valere. I do.

A wonderful choice, well worth attending to.

Mariane. Very well! That's advice, sir, that I accept.

Valere. I doubt that taking it causes you regret.

Mariane. No more regret than giving it causes you.

Valere. I gave it thinking pleasure would ensue.

Mariane. And I, I'll take it--simply to please you.

Dorine [moving upstage]. Let's see what comes of this hullabaloo.

Valere. So that's your love for me? And did you lie

When you . . .

Mariane. Please, let's not speak of days gone by.

You've told me quite plainly that I must embrace

As my mate the man they've chosen for that place,

And now I say that I promise to obey

Since you so kindly advise me that way.

Valere. Don't excuse yourself through circumlocution:

You've already made your own resolution,

And you've seized upon a frivolous excuse

To justify this lamentable ruse.

Mariane. Quite true and well said.

Valere. No doubt, and your soul

Never lost, for love of me, its self-control.

Mariane. Alas! Alas! You may as well think so.

Valere. Yes, I may think so, but my broken heart

Foresees you, too, suffering from Love's dart;

I know to whom I'll take my heart and hand.

Mariane. No doubt, and the love that merit can command...

Valere. Dear God, let's leave merit to one side.

I haven't much of it, as you have signified,  
But I know where there's a woman, soft-eyed  
And open-hearted . . . and this double-cross  
May make her more inclined to recompense my loss.

Mariane. The loss isn't great; and your fickleness  
Will soon lead you to find a new mistress.

Valere. I'll do my best--of that you may be sure!  
When one is forgotten, it's hard to endure,  
And so I, too, must struggle to forget.  
If I can't do it, I'll fake it . . . and yet  
I could never forgive my own servility  
If I kept loving one who abandoned me.

Mariane. What a noble, uplifting sentiment!

Valere. Quite so. Everyone should give it their assent.  
What? Do you think that I should perpetuate  
The flame of love that I have felt of late,  
And see you pass into another's arms  
Without letting my heart seek other charms?

Mariane. No, indeed. It's what I want, and I vow  
I wish the thing were to happen right now.

Valere. You do?

Mariane. Yes.

Valere. That's enough insults from you,  
Madam, and now I will bid you adieu.

[He starts to leave; each time he does so, he quickly comes back.]

Mariane. Very well.

Valere [coming back]. At least remember that you  
Are the one who forced me down this avenue.

Mariane. Yes.

Valere. And that I am doing nothing more  
Than following the path you took before.

Mariane. So be it.

Valere [leaving]. Fine. I'm doing what you want.

Mariane. Good.

Valere [returning again]. I'm leaving forever--not some short jaunt.

Mariane. The sooner the better.

[He begins to leave and, when he is near the door, he returns.]

Valere. Eh?

Mariane. What?

Valere. You called?

Mariane. Me? No.

Valere. Ah. Well then, I'll soon be abroad.  
Adieu, madam. [He slowly starts to leave.]

Mariane. Adieu.

Dorine [to Mariane]. I think, perchance,  
You've lost your mind through extravagance,

And I've only allowed you to go on  
Like this to see what folly you might spawn.

Hey! Valere! [She grabs him by the arm and he makes a show of resistance.]

Valere. Huh? What do you want, Dorine?

Dorine. Come here.

Valere. No. I'm too mad. Don't intervene.

She wishes me to drain this bitter cup.

Dorine. Stop.

Valere. No, can't you see that my mind's made up?

Dorine. Ah!

Mariane [aside]. My presence pains him, I drive him away.

I think it would be best if I didn't stay.

Dorine [She leaves Valere and runs after Mariane]. Now where are you going?

Mariane. Let go.

Dorine. Then return.

Mariane. No, no, Dorine. It's none of your concern.

Valere [aside]. I see that my presence causes her pain;

It would be best if I freed her again.

Dorine [She leaves Mariane and runs to Valere].

Wait! May you both be damned if I want this mess!

Come here you two and settle this fracas.

[She pulls them both together.]

Valere [to Dorine]. But what's your plan?

Mariane [to Dorine]. What do you wish to do?

Dorine. To patch things up a bit between you two.

[To Valere]. Are you out of your mind to fight in this way?

Valere. Did you hear her treat me like a popinjay?

Dorine [to Mariane]. Are you mad to have gotten so enraged?

Mariane. Did you see what happened? It can't be assuaged.

Dorine. You're both dunces. [To Valere] She wants nothing more

Than to be the one woman you adore.

[To Mariane] He loves you alone, and to make you his wife

Is his only desire--I swear on my life!

Mariane [to Valere]. How, then, could you give me such bad advice?

Valere. And how could you demand it? Was that wise?

Dorine. You're both insane. Now give your hands to me.

[To Valere] Come on.

Valere [giving his hand to Dorine]. What for?

Dorine. There. [To Mariane] Now yours, don't you see.

Mariane [giving her hand as well]. What's the point of all this?

Dorine. Lord! Quick! Come on!

Your love for each other can't be withdrawn.

[Valere and Mariane hold hands for awhile without looking at each other.]

Valere [turning toward Mariane]. Don't react so painfully by the book.  
Try giving a fellow a civil look.  
[Mariane turns her gaze on Valere and gives him a shy smile.]  
Dorine. All lovers are crazy! It's sad, but true.  
Valere [to Mariane]. Am I not right to complain about you?  
And to tell the truth, weren't you rather unkind  
To delight in trying to unsettle my mind?  
Mariane. What about you? Aren't you the bigger ingrate . . . ?  
Dorine. Let's wait until later for this debate  
And try instead to stop this marriage.  
Mariane. Tell us, then, what we can use for leverage.  
Dorine. We will wage warfare on every front.  
Your father is bluffing and playing a stunt.  
[To Mariane] But it might be better for you to seem  
To sweetly consent to his crazy scheme  
So that, whatever the future may bring,  
You can postpone and postpone this wedding.  
By gaining time, we gain our remedy.  
Sometimes you will feign a strange malady  
Whose sudden onset will bring some delay;  
Sometimes an ill-omen will cause you dismay:  
You saw a corpse and never felt queerer,  
Dreamt of muddy water, or broke a mirror.  
The point above all is that no one, I guess,  
Can force you to marry unless you say, "Yes."  
But our ship would sail in fairer weather  
If you were never seen talking together.  
[To Valere] Go, and without delay employ each friend  
To keep him on course toward what we intend.  
[To Mariane] We are going to seek help from his brother  
And we'll also recruit your step-mother.  
Farewell.  
Valere [to Mariane]. Whatever we attempt to do,  
In truth, my greatest hope resides in you.  
Mariane [to Valere]. Although I cannot answer for my father,  
I vow I'll never belong to another.  
Valere. How happy you have made me! If they ever . . .  
Dorine. Fie! You young lovers prattle forever!  
Be off, I say.  
Valere [going a step and then returning]. Finally . . .  
Dorine. What blather!  
You go off that way, and you go the other.

### ACT III

#### SCENE I

Damis, Dorine

Damis. May a bolt of lightning now strike me dumb,  
May everybody treat me like a bum  
If either respect or force can hinder me  
From blowing my top at this calamity!

Dorine. For heaven's sake, control your displeasure.  
Your father has merely mentioned this measure.  
No one does everything he proposes.  
How something opens may not be how it closes.

Damis. I need to stop this vulgar coxcomb's plot  
And in two little words tell him what's what.

Dorine. Whoa now! Why don't you let your step-mother  
Manage him just as she does your father.  
Over Tartuffe she has her own little ways  
Of making him welcome all that she says,  
And perhaps she makes his heart go pitter-patter.  
Pray God it's true! That would be a fine matter.  
In fact she has summoned him for your sake  
In order to learn exactly what's at stake,  
To find out his feelings, and to let him know  
What really rotten results would flow  
From any pretensions he might have to marry.  
His valet says he's praying, and I should tarry--  
That he'll descend after he meditates.  
Be off then, I beg you, and let me wait.

Damis. I demand to be here the whole time they meet.

Dorine. No. They must be alone.

Damis. I won't even speak.

Dorine. You're kidding yourself. You're so quick to anger,  
And that would surely put us all in danger.  
Go.

Damis. No. I'm going to watch--without getting cross.

Dorine. How tiresome you are! Here they come. Get lost!  
[Damis hides himself in a closet.]

#### SCENE II

Tartuffe, Laurent, Dorine

Tartuffe [observing Dorine]. Laurent, lock up my hair shirt and my scourge,  
And pray for freedom from each carnal urge.  
If anyone comes calling, say I have gone  
To share my alms with the poor souls in prison.



Dorine [aside]. Such affectation and boastful behavior!

Tartuffe. What do you wish?

Dorine. To say . . .

Tartuffe [taking a handkerchief from his pocket]. Wait! By our Savior,  
Please! Before you speak take this handkerchief.

Dorine. Why?

Tartuffe. Because seeing your bosom causes me grief.  
Through one's eyes one's soul may be wounded,  
And then sinful thoughts may grow unattended.

Dorine. Then you are quite ready for temptation,  
And bare skin makes on you a big impression.  
I truly don't know why you feel such passion;  
I myself think lust is out of fashion,  
For I could see you nude from top to toe  
Without your pelt setting my cheeks aglow.

Tartuffe. Put a little modesty in your discourse  
Or I must leave you instantly perforce.

Dorine. No, it is I who will leave you here in peace,  
And I will just say this before I cease:  
Madam is coming down to visit you  
And demands the favor of a rendezvous.

Tartuffe. Oh yes! Most willingly!

Dorine [to herself]. Isn't he sweet!  
I'm even surer now that dog's in heat.

Tartuffe. Will she soon come?

Dorine. I think I can hear her.  
Yes, there. Now I will leave you two together.

### SCENE III

Elmire, Tartuffe

Tartuffe. May Heaven forever in its great bounty  
Grant you good health both in soul and body,  
And bless your days as much as he desires  
Who is the humblest of those your love inspires!

Elmire. I'm much obliged for your pious wishes, but please,  
Let us be seated and put ourselves at ease.

Tartuffe [sitting down]. Have you quite recovered from your illness?

Elmire [sitting as well]. Yes, my headache quickly lost its sharpness.

Tartuffe. My prayers haven't enough value to buy  
Such grace from the Heavenly One on High,  
But most of my recent prayers have in essence  
Been mainly focused on your convalescence.

Elmire. Your concern for me is somewhat disquieting.

Tartuffe. I dearly cherish your precious well-being,  
And to restore it I would have given my own.

Elmire. Such Christian charity is overblown,  
But I am much obliged for all your care.

Tartuffe. I try to do as much for you as I dare.

Elmire. I wish to speak of some private business  
And am pleased there's no one to overhear us.

Tartuffe. I, too, am delighted, and entre nous  
It's very sweet being one-on-one with you.  
For this also have I begged the Deity,  
But only now has he granted it to me.

Elmire. I myself want an encounter between us two  
Where your whole heart is opened through and through.

[Without exposing himself and in order to better hear the conversation,  
Damis opens the door of the closet in which he is hiding.]

Tartuffe. In exchange for this unique blessing, I  
Desire only to reveal to you my  
Whole soul, and to swear that all my preaching  
About your guests--though perhaps over-reaching--  
Was not caused by any anger or hate  
But rather by a zeal that's passionate  
And pure . . .

Elmire. I wholly understand and declare  
My belief that you seek only my welfare.

Tartuffe [pressing the tips of her fingers]. Yes, madam, it's true; my devotion is  
such . . .

Elmire. You're hurting me.

Tartuffe. Passion pushes me too much.  
I never wanted to hurt you, I swear,  
And I would rather . . .  
[He puts his hand on her knee.]

Elmire. Why is your hand there?

Tartuffe. I'm feeling your dress. Such fine dimity!

Elmire. Oh! Please let me go. You're tickling me.

[She pushes her chair back, and Tartuffe moves his forward.]

Tartuffe [putting his hand on her lacy collar]. Dear Lord! But this workmanship is  
marvelous!

Lacework nowadays is miraculous.  
I've never seen anything quite so fine.

Elmire. That's true. But let's speak of this concern of mine.  
I hear that my husband may be breaking his word  
And giving you his daughter. What have you heard?

Tartuffe. In truth, madam, some such words did transpire,  
But that is not the joy to which I aspire,  
And I see elsewhere those splendid attractions  
Which I seek to attain through all of my actions.

Elmire. Then all your earthly love has been overthrown?

Tartuffe. My breast does not hold a heart made of stone.

Elmire. I'm sure that all your thoughts are on salvation,  
And nothing less holds any fascination.

Tartuffe. The love that attracts us to what's eternal  
Does not stop our love for the merely temporal.  
Our senses can be quite easily charmed  
By the perfect Earthly works that God has formed.  
His glory is mirrored in those like you,  
But in you yourself we see its rarest hue.  
He has molded your face with such sublime art  
That it surprises the eye and transports the heart,  
And I can't gaze upon you, you perfect creature,  
Without worshipping in you both God and nature,  
And sensing in my soul an ardent love  
For this, the most beautiful portrait by God above.  
At first I feared that my secret passion  
Might be a tricky trap laid by Satan,  
And I even resolved to flee from your eyes  
As if you were something to exorcise.  
But I finally learned, oh beauty most lovable,  
That my ardor for you could never be culpable,  
That I should even consider it right,  
And so I submit to my heart's delight.  
I confess that I'm playing an audacious part  
In presenting to you the gift of my heart,  
But I place all my faith in your kindness  
Like a beggar-man hindered by blindness.  
In you I seek peace, hope, and happiness;  
On you depends my torment or my bliss.  
And through you alone I will finally be  
Happy if you will, or sad if you please.

Elmire. That declaration is very urbane,  
But in a man of God it's a bit profane.  
You ought to protect your heart a bit better  
And reflect more deeply on such a matter.  
A saint like you whom we all hail . . .

Tartuffe. I may be holy, but I'm nonetheless male,  
And when one sees your heavenly charms,  
It's time for reason to throw up its arms.  
I know such words from me may seem strange--though,  
Madam, after all, I am not an angel,  
And if you condemn the confession I'm making,  
Admit nonetheless that your beauty's breath-taking.  
From the first time I set eyes on your supreme  
Splendor, my heart became yours and you my queen.

The ineffable sweetness of your divine gaze  
Shattered my stout heart and set it ablaze.  
That look conquered all--fasting, prayers, duty--  
And turned my vows into praise of your beauty.  
My eyes and my sighs have often shown my choice  
But to make it still clearer I now add my voice.  
If you should look down with a kindly eye  
Upon the base woes of a slave such as I  
And if your great kindness should happen to lead  
You to stoop down and grant what I need,  
I should always have for you, oh precious one,  
A love that beggars all comparison.  
With me your honor will never be damaged;  
No disgrace can attend an affair I have managed.  
All these gallants at court, for whom wives act absurd,  
Are reckless in their deeds and rash in their words.  
They endlessly brag about every success.  
Each favor they receive, they quickly confess,  
And their wagging tongues, on which you rely,  
Dishonor the shrine before which they lie.  
But men like me burn with a discreet fever,  
And we keep your sweet secrets safe forever.  
The concern we have for our good reputation  
Will also preserve you in your own station;  
In us you will find, if you wish it, my dear,  
Love without scandal, pleasure without fear.

Elmire. I have heard your words, and your rhetoric  
Leaves your point clear--though you lay it on thick.  
Aren't you afraid that I could be in the mood  
To tell my husband of your solicitude,  
And that a sudden knowledge of that sort  
Might set back your hopes of his lasting support?

Tartuffe. I know that you are only too gracious  
And that you will forgive my audacious  
Deeds since they spring from a human failing  
In that passionate love that you are bewailing,  
And that you will reflect when you view things afresh  
That I am not blind, and a man's only flesh.

Elmire. Others might take things differently, I suppose,  
But discretion prevails, and I won't expose  
This matter to my spouse. In return, it's true,  
I do want one little favor from you:  
To push forward without any sly snare  
The wedding of Mariane and Valere,  
To renounce on your own the unjust power  
That would enrich you with another's dower,

And . . .

#### SCENE IV

Elmire, Damis, Tartuffe

Damis [coming out of the closet in which he was hiding]. No, madam, no. All this must be exposed.

By hiding here I've heard all he proposed,  
And God in His goodness has guided me  
To confound this noisome bastard's treachery,  
To discover a way to take my vengeance  
For his hypocrisy and insolence,  
To wake up my father, and to justly screw  
This scumbag who wants to make love to you.

Elmire. No, Damis. It's enough if he has striven  
To reform and merit the pardon I've given.  
Don't make me retract what I have avowed.  
I don't choose to discuss scandal out loud:  
A woman laughs at these masculine foibles,  
And never plagues her mate with paltry troubles.

Damis. You have your own reasons for acting so,  
And I have reasons for my quid-pro-quo.  
The very thought of sparing him is a joke,  
And the insolent pride of this base bloke  
Has triumphed too often over my just wrath,  
And has sown too much trouble along my path.  
For too long that liar has ruled my old man  
Blocking both my love and that of Mariane.  
His perfidy must be brought to light of day,  
And for that God gives us a ready way.  
For this occasion I thank the good Lord;  
It is far too lucky to be ignored.  
The only way to deserve to lose it  
Is to have it in hand and not to use it.

Elmire. But Damis . . .

Damis. No, please, my mind is made up.  
It is time to rejoice and fill up the cup,  
And you're trying in vain to obligate me  
To give up the pleasure of my victory.  
I'm going to expose this affair without delay;  
This is just the thing that will make my day.

#### SCENE V

Orgon, Damis, Tartuffe, Elmire

Damis. Father, it may surprise . . . and amuse you greatly . . .

To hear the news of what's gone on lately.  
You're being well paid for all your caresses  
By your friend's response to those tendernesses.  
His great love for you has shown its hold  
Through his eagerness to make you a cuckold.  
And I heard him here confess to your bride  
A love that has made him heart-sick and dove-eyed.  
At all costs she wants to remain discreet  
And preserve his secret--because she's sweet--  
But I cannot bear the man's impudence  
And think that my silence would cause you offense.

Elmire. Yes, I would never disturb my husband's rest  
By reporting the words of silly pest.  
My honor does not depend on such a thing  
Since I'm well able to resist flattering.  
You wouldn't have spoken out against my view  
If I had any power over you.

#### SCENE VI

Orgon, Damis, Tartuffe

Orgon. What do I hear? Good God! Is it credible?

Tartuffe. Yes, brother, I'm wicked and culpable,  
A sorry sinner, full of iniquity,  
As great a wretch as there ever could be.  
My entire life has been soiled with evil;  
It's nothing but a mass of sinful upheaval.  
And I see that God has, for my punishment,  
Chosen to mortify me with this event.  
Let them connect any crime with my name;  
I waive all defense and take all the blame.  
Believe what they tell you, stoke up your wrath,  
And drive me like a felon from your path.  
The shame that I bear cannot be too great,  
For I know I deserve a much worse fate.

Orgon [to his son]. Traitor! Do you dare, by your duplicity,  
To taint both his virtue and purity?

Damis. What? Can the false meekness of this hypocrite  
Cause you to belie . . .

Orgon. Shut up, you misfit.

Tartuffe. Oh, let him go on. You are wrong to scold,  
And you'd be wise to believe the story he's told.  
In light of his claims, why should you favor me?  
What do you know of my culpability?  
Why put your faith in my exterior?  
Why should you think that I'm superior?

No, no, appearances are fooling you,  
I am the kind of man you should eschew.  
The whole world thinks that I have earned God's blessing,  
But the plain truth is . . . that I'm worth nothing.

[Addressing Damis]

Yes, my dear son, speak. And don't merely chide.  
Accuse me of treason, theft, and homicide.  
Call me every foul name you can recall.  
I deny nothing. I merit it all.  
And I beg on my knees to bear this chagrin  
As the shameful result of my life of sin.

Orgon [To Tartuffe]. That's too much, brother. [To his son] Why can't you let go,  
Scoundrel?

Damis. What! Have his words seduced you so . . .

Orgon Keep quiet, you bum! [To Tartuffe]. Brother, please arise.

[To his son]. Shame!

Damis. He can . . .

Orgon. Silence!

Damis. Damn! Do you surmise . . .

Orgon. If you say one word, I will break your arm.

Tartuffe. In the name of God, brother, do no harm.

I would rather face a ravening beast  
Than that your dear son should be harmed in the least.

Orgon [to his son]. Ingrate!

Tartuffe. Leave him in peace. On my two knees

I beg you to give him your grace . . .

Orgon [throwing himself to his knees and embracing Tartuffe]. Don't! Please!

[To his son] Wretch, see his goodness.

Damis. Then . . .

Orgon. Shhh!

Damis. I . . .

Orgon. Cease, I say.

I'm aware of your motive in this foray:  
You all hate him, and now I see how my wife,  
Children, and maid conspire against his life.  
You impudently try every trick you can  
To alienate me from this holy man,  
But the harder you try to drive him away,  
The harder I'll try to get him to stay.  
And I'll hasten his marriage to Mariane  
To demolish the pride of this whole clan.

Damis. So you will force her to marry this fellow?

Orgon. Yes, this very night, to see you bellow.

I defy you all, and stand here to say  
I am the master and you must obey.  
Come now. Retract your words, oh foul pollution!

Throw yourself down and demand absolution.

Damis. Who, me? Of that villain, by whose pretense . . .

Orgon. So you refuse, you scum, and your impertinence  
Persists? [To Tartuffe] A stick! A staff! Don't hold me back.  
[To his son] Get out of my house and don't even pack,  
And never again let me see your face.

Damis. Yes, I will go, but . . .

Orgon. Quickly! Leave this place.  
I am cutting you off and what is worse  
I am leaving you with my heart-felt curse.

## SCENE VII

Orgon, Tartuffe

Orgon. To offend in that way a saintly man!

Tartuffe. Heavenly Lord pardon him if you can.

[To Orgon.] If you only knew with what pain  
I see them trying to blacken my name. . . .

Orgon. Alas!

Tartuffe. The mere thought of this ingratitude  
Makes me suffer from a torture so crude . . .  
The horror I feel . . . My soul longs to cry . . .  
I can't even speak, and I'm sure I will die.

Orgon [He runs weeping to the door through which he had chased his son.]

Villain! How I regret that I held my hand  
And that I did not crush you where you stand.  
[To Tartuffe.] Calm yourself, brother and try not to fret.

Tartuffe. Let's stop these squabbles that end in regret.  
The great friction I have caused makes me grieve,  
And I believe, brother, that I should leave.

Orgon. What? Surely you jest?

Tartuffe. They hate me and I see  
That they want you to doubt my integrity.

Orgon. Who cares! Do you think I'll listen to them?

Tartuffe. No doubt they'll continue their stratagem;  
And the same tales that you reject today  
You may find credible some other day.

Orgon. No, brother, never.

Tartuffe. Ah, brother, a man's mate  
Can easily make her spouse speculate.

Orgon. No, no.

Tartuffe. Let me leave here at once and so  
Escape the threat of another low blow.

Orgon. No, please remain. I can't live without you.

Tartuffe. Well! I suppose I will suffer if I do.  
Still, if you wish . . .



Orgon. Oh!  
Tartuffe. All right! It's a pact.  
But in future I know how I must act.  
Honor is tender, and friendship engages  
Me to prevent gossip--however outrageous.  
I'll avoid your wife and you will not see me . . .  
Orgon. No, in spite of everyone, you and she  
Must often meet. I love to make a stir,  
So day and night let them see you with her.  
No, that's not enough, but this will make them stew:  
I don't want to have any heir but you,  
And I'm going to legally designate  
You as the owner of my whole estate.  
A frank and true friend, whom I take as my son,  
Is dearer to me than my wife or children.  
Will you accept the offer I am making?  
Tartuffe. May God's will be done in this undertaking!  
Orgon. Poor man! Let's quickly put it all in writing,  
And let their envy choke on its own spiting.

#### ACT IV

#### SCENE I

Cleante, Tartuffe

Cleante. Yes, the whole town is talking about it,  
And they don't think it does you much credit.  
And I've sought you out, sir, just for the sake  
Of telling you bluntly what I think's at stake.  
I'm not going to dredge up the whole dispute;  
The fact is Damis is in disrepute.  
Supposing that he did act like a fool  
And that you are unfairly being called cruel,  
Shouldn't a Christian pardon the offense  
And purge his soul of desire for vengeance?  
And should you permit him, for this one goof,  
To be driven away from his father's roof?  
I'll tell you again, and I'll be bold:  
You are scandalizing both young and old.  
If you take my advice, you will seek a truce  
And not be a party to this boy's abuse.  
Make an offering to God of your acrimony,  
And restore the son to his patrimony.  
Tartuffe. Alas! As for myself, I seek that solace:  
I do not have for him the slightest malice;  
I wholly forgive him of any blame,

And long to restore him to his good name.  
But in the service of God I can't permit  
It, for if he remains I shall have to quit  
This house. No prior offense holds a candle  
To his. Our meeting would cause a huge scandal.  
Lord only knows what people would assume!  
They would impute it to cunning, I presume,  
And say that my guilt has made me pretend  
To excuse him of any intent to offend,  
And that I fear him and wish to placate him  
As a crafty move in my plan to checkmate him.

Cleante. I think you are making up excuses,  
And your arguments, monsieur, seem like ruses.  
Must you assume the role of the Deity?  
Does He need us to punish the guilty?  
Leave it to Him to take care of vengeance;  
He bids us to forgive every offense  
And not to consider human judgments  
When we follow God's sovereign commandments.  
What? Should the petty fear of what some may say  
Prevent you from doing this good deed today?  
No, let us always follow God's commands,  
And leave all other matters in His hands.

Tartuffe. I've told you already that I forgive  
Him, and that, sir, is God's directive.  
But after such scandal and vituperation  
God doesn't demand our cohabitation.

Cleante. And does He demand that you lend your hand  
To the pure caprice of the father's command,  
And accept the gift of his whole estate  
Which you cannot justly appropriate?

Tartuffe. Those who know me will not believe that I'd  
Do anything selfish or unjustified.  
I hold worldly goods in quite low esteem.  
I can't be dazzled by their phony gleam.  
And if in the end I decide to take  
The gift that the father wishes to make,  
It is only, I swear, because I fear  
That it could be left to a false profiteer,  
Or that it could be shared by those who would  
Use it to do evil rather than good,  
And who would not use it, as I'm sure I can,  
For the glory of God and one's fellow man.

Cleante. Oh, sir! Don't put on that scrupulous air  
While your actions injure a rightful heir.  
Don't feel uneasy or risk your good health

By fretting about the perils of his wealth.  
It is better spent on a young man's whim  
Than that you be accused of defrauding him.  
I only wonder why you aren't ashamed  
By this proposal in which you are named.  
In true religion is there some dictum  
That says it's okay to make an heir your victim?  
And if God has put some obstacle in place  
Against you and Damis sharing the same space,  
Wouldn't you prefer to be more discrete  
And leave this house in a noble retreat  
Than to sit and see the son of the house  
Thrust from his home like a beggarly louse.  
Believe me, it would prove your probity,  
Monsieur, . . .

Tartuffe. It is now, Monsieur, half past three:  
Certain religious rites demand my presence,  
And you must excuse me for my absence. [He leaves.]  
Cleante. Ah!

## SCENE II

Elmire, Mariane, Dorine, Cleante

Dorine [to Cleante]. Please, sir, help us help her, for pity's sake.  
Her suffering is such that her heart may break,  
And the pact her father made this evening  
Is the cause of all this awful grieving.  
Here he comes. Let's join forces, I beg you,  
And try through skill or cunning to undo  
The vicious scheme that's left us all so troubled.

## Scene 3

Orgon, Elmire, Mariane, Cleante, Dorine

Orgon. Ah! I'm pleased to see you all assembled.  
[To Mariane] This contract here should make you very gay;  
I'm sure you know what I'm about to say.  
Mariane [kneeling]. In the name of God, who knows how I hurt,  
And of everything which might move your heart,  
Forgo, for now, the rights of paternity  
And release me from my vow of docility.  
Do not reduce me by some brutal rule  
To asking God why you've grown so cruel.  
And this life, alas, that you gave to me--  
Do not make it a life of misery.  
If, contrary to all my sweet hopes of

Joy, you forbid me to wed the man I love,  
Hear me at least--on my knees I implore  
You not to give me to a man I abhor,  
And don't push me past the point of despair  
By using your full force in this affair.

Orgon [to himself, sensing himself weakening]. Be firm. This is no time for humanity!

Mariane. Your fondness for him doesn't bother me.

Indulge it, and if it's not enough to consign  
Your whole estate to him--then give him mine!  
I freely consent and will sign on demand,  
But please, please, do not offer him my hand,  
And allow me to live in a convent where I  
May count the sad days till God lets me die.

Orgon. Young girls always play such religious pranks  
When their fathers hobble their lusty flanks!  
Get up! The harder you have to work to bear it,  
The greater the virtue and the merit.  
Let this marriage mortify your senses  
And quit bothering me with your meek defenses.

Dorine. But . . .

Orgon. Keep quiet, and stay out of this matter.  
I completely forbid you to add to the chatter.

Cleante. If you will allow me to offer some advice . . .

Orgon. Brother, your advice is worth any price:  
It is thoughtful and I truly respect it,  
But I hope you don't mind if I reject it.

Elmire [to her husband]. What can I think about what you're saying  
Except that your blindness is quite dismaying!  
You must be besotted and led astray  
To refuse to believe what has happened today.

Orgon. My dear, I only call 'em as I see 'em.  
You favor my son, that worthless young bum,  
And I think that you are afraid to condemn  
His dirty trick on this most saintly of men.  
You are, in fact, too calm to be believed;  
You ought to have seemed a bit more aggrieved.

Elmire. When a love-sick man makes a foolish mistake  
Must we take up arms as if honor's at stake?  
And should we always respond to small slips  
With fire in our eyes and abuse on our lips?  
For myself, I laugh at these signs of lust;  
It doesn't please me at all to grow nonplussed.  
I seek wisdom tempered with charity,  
And I'm not one of those prudes whose asperity  
Is such that they fight for virtue tooth and nail,

And scratch a man's eyes out for being male.  
Heaven preserve me from that kind of virtue!  
I am an honest wife, but not a shrew,  
And I believe that a calm, icy glance  
Is quite enough to rebuff an advance.

Orgon. I know what I know and I won't change my mind.

Elmire. I'm again amazed that you could be so blind.  
But would you keep that incredulity  
If I made you see that we have spoken truly?

Orgon. See?

Elmire. Yes.

Orgon. Fantasy!

Elmire. But if I found a way  
To make you see it all in light of day?

Orgon. Fairy tales!

Elmire. What a man! At least reply.  
I don't ask you to believe me, but I  
Do wonder what you will say of your good man  
If I bring you to a place where you can  
Clearly see and hear these things? What then?

Orgon. In that case I would say . . . nothing again,  
For it cannot be.

Elmire. You've been blind too long,  
And in calling me a liar, you're wrong!  
So for your pleasure, but with modesty,  
I'll make you witness my veracity.

Orgon. Good. I take you at your word. Now let's see  
How in the world you will prove this to me.

Elmire [to Dorine]. Bid him come to me.

Dorine [to Elmire]. He's a crafty one  
And perhaps he won't easily be undone.

Elmire [to Dorine]. No, we're easily duped by our affection,  
And vanity aids in our misdirection.

[Speaking to Cleante and Mariane] Send him down here to me. And you  
can go.

#### SCENE IV

Elmire, Orgon

Elmire. Bring the table here, and then crouch down low.

Orgon. Why?

Elmire. Hiding you well is to be desired.

Orgon. Why under the table?

Elmire. Just do what's required!  
I've made my plans and we'll see how they fare!  
Get under the table, and when you're down there,

Don't let him see you and try not to grunt.  
Orgon. I really think I'm far too tolerant,  
But I'll stay through the end of your stratagem.  
Elmire. You won't, I'm sure, have a thing to condemn.  
[To her husband, who is now under the table.]  
Mind you, I'm going to have strange things to say  
And you must not be shocked in any way.  
Whatever I may say, you must allow;  
I only wish to convince you, anyhow.  
I'm going to use sex, since I'm reduced to it,  
To strip off the cloak of this hypocrite;  
I'll stoke up the fires of his insolent heart  
And give a free field to this base upstart.  
For your sake and to deepen his disrepute  
I'm going to pretend to welcome his suit.  
I'll quit just as soon as you've heard enough.  
Things needn't go farther than you wish, my love.  
And you must stop them from becoming bizarre  
When you think his mad love has gone too far.  
Spare your wife and don't leave me in his hands  
Longer than reaching your conviction demands.  
This is your concern and you are in command.  
Here he comes. Keep still! Keep down! Understand?

#### SCENE V

Tartuffe, Elmire, Orgon (under the table)

Tartuffe. You wish to speak with me in here, I'm told.  
Elmire. Yes. I now have some secrets to unfold,  
But shut the door before I say a word  
And look around--we mustn't be overheard.  
[Tartuffe closes the door and returns.]  
I don't want another fracas to ensue  
Like the one that overtook us hitherto.  
Never before have I been so dismayed!  
Damis startled me and made me afraid  
For you. You must have seen that I did my best  
To disrupt his plan and soothe his unrest.  
It is true that I was so filled with shame  
That I never thought of denying his claim,  
But by the grace of God, I'm nearly sure  
All is for the best and we're now more secure.  
The prestige of your name has dispelled the storm,  
And my husband will never suspect you of harm.  
Defying those with rumors to foment,  
He wants us together at every moment.

And that is why without blame I can  
Be alone with you although you're a man,  
And that allows me to open my heart  
Willingly to the sweet thoughts you impart.

Tartuffe. I find it odd that you have kind words to say;  
Earlier you treated me in a different way.

Elmire. Ah! If you're angry about that rebuff,  
You know nothing about a woman's love!  
And how little you know about our intent  
If you think a weak defense is really meant!  
At such times our modesty must contend  
With the tender feelings that triumph in the end.  
No matter how strongly you make love's claim,  
In embracing it we always feel some shame.  
We resist at first, but in our faces  
It's clear that we'll soon yield to your embraces.  
Our words and our wishes are often opposed:  
A refusal may mean we accept what's proposed.  
No doubt I am making too free a confession  
And I may be committing an indiscretion,  
But since my attempt at silence has gone awry,  
Ask yourself why I sought to pacify  
Damis, and what made me listen so long  
And so kindly to your sweet love song?  
Would I have reacted as you saw me do  
If the offer of your heart didn't please me too?  
And what should you be able to conclude  
From my fervent desire to preclude  
The marriage that has been announced just now?  
Isn't it that I'd hate for a wedding vow  
To come between us, and that I care for you  
And want nothing at all to split us in two?

Tartuffe. There is no pleasure in Heaven above  
Sweeter than such words from the lips I love;  
Their honeyed sound flows richly through my senses  
With the sweetness of the purest essences.  
The pleasure of pleasing you is my one goal,  
And my heart finds happiness in that role,  
But that heart also takes the slight liberty  
Of daring to doubt this felicity.  
Perhaps these sweet words are a decorous ruse  
Designed to disrupt my hymeneal news;  
And, if I may speak quite freely with you,  
I won't believe that all you say is true  
Until I'm assured that you couldn't lie  
By a few of those favors for which I sigh.

Such favors would make me your devotee  
And a true believer in your fondness for me.

Elmire [she coughs to warn her husband]. Do you demand to push on with such great speed,

And drain my heart dry by your burning need?  
I risk my life in proclaiming my love,  
And for you even that is not enough!  
Can't you be satisfied with what I say?  
Must you force me into going all the way?

Tartuffe. The less one merits, the more one desires.  
Mere words will never quench our raging fires.  
A promised gift is often suspected;  
We rarely believe it, until we inspect it.  
I, who so little merit your favors,  
Doubt the happy outcome of my labors.  
And I will not believe a thing, my dear,  
Until you ease my pain to prove you're sincere.

Elmire. Good God, your love is too oppressive;  
It troubles my soul and becomes obsessive!  
What a crazy power it has on the heart!  
With what fierce passion it tears me apart!  
What! Is there no way to stave off your desire?  
Won't you give me a moment to respire?  
Do you think it is fair to be so firm,  
To demand everything and watch me squirm,  
To take what you want, pushing and pressing,  
And abusing my weakness in acquiescing?

Tartuffe. If you look on me with a kindly heart,  
Then prove how you feel by playing your part.

Elmire. But how can I give you the things you seek  
Without offending that God of whom you speak?

Tartuffe. If it's only God that opposes my desire,  
I'll think up a way to make him conspire,  
And that need not restrain your heart, my dear.

Elmire. But the decrees of God scare me to tears.

Tartuffe. I can dispel your foolish fears, madame,  
For I know the art of quashing each qualm.  
Though God forbids certain gratifications,  
With him one can reach one's accommodations.  
It is a science to stretch out the strings  
Of conscience in the service of diverse things  
And to rectify an evil action  
With the purity of our intention.  
Regarding these secrets, I shall instruct you;  
You need only allow me to conduct you.  
Satisfy my desire and have no fear;



I'll assume the sin and leave your soul clear.

[Elmire coughs more loudly.]

That's quite a cough, madame.

Elmire. Yes, it's a torment.

Tartuffe [offering Elmire a piece of candy]. Would it help to have a licorice or mint?

Elmire. It's an obstinate illness, and I see

That all the mints in the world won't help me

Tartuffe. It's certainly troublesome.

Elmire. That's for sure!

Tartuffe. Your scruples at least are easy to cure:

You can be sure that I will keep things quiet--

A deed is evil only if men spy it.

The noise of scandal is the source of offense;

There is no sin if one sins in silence.

Elmire [after having coughed and knocked on the table]. At last I see I'm forced to go astray,

And I must consent to let you have your way,

And that I cannot hope that short of the deed

You will be content and willing to concede.

It is very hard to be forced to do it,

And in spite of myself to stoop down to it;

But since you persist in making me obey,

Since you refuse to believe what I say,

And since you demand more convincing proof,

I'll have to give in and quit acting aloof.

If this action causes anyone grief,

The blame be on him who refused all relief.

The fault most certainly is none of mine.

Tartuffe. Yes, madame, I agree and that is fine . . .

Elmire. Peek out of the door and see, I beg you,

If my spouse is spying on our rendezvous.

Tartuffe. Why do you care what he sees or where he goes?

He's a man who loves to be led by the nose.

Our trysts are something he's proud of achieving,

And he'd watch us go to it without believing.

Elmire. No matter. Please, go have a look outside;

I'd hate to think he's found some place to hide.

## SCENE VI

Orgon, Elmire

Orgon [coming out from under the table]. There, I swear, is an abominable man!

I can't get over it. What is his plan?

Elmire. How now? Come out so soon? Were you having fun?

Get back down there. We've only just begun.

Wait till the end to be completely sure,  
And don't put your faith in mere conjecture.  
Orgon. No man more evil has been spawned in Hell.  
Elmire. Dear Lord! Don't believe the lies people tell.  
Be wholly convinced before you concede:  
Cautious men shun the slips that come with speed.  
[She pushes her husband behind her.]

## SCENE VII

Tartuffe, Elmire, Orgon

Tartuffe [without seeing Orgon]. All things conspire, madame, for my contentment:

I've closely examined the whole apartment;

No one is around, and my heart's delight. . .

[Just as Tartuffe comes forward with open arms to embrace Elmire, she steps back and Tartuffe sees Orgon.]

Orgon [stopping him]. Hold on! Your desires are too quick to ignite,

And you mustn't let passion be overdone.

Oh! Man of blessings, you wished to give me one!

How temptation has taken over your life!

You'd marry my daughter, and covet my wife!

I've doubted your word for quite a long while,

And I've always believed you'd change your style;

But this is enough to give me my proof:

I am fed up and want no more, Tartuffe.

Elmire [to Tartuffe]. It was against my will to act this way,

But I was forced into the part I play.

Tartuffe [to Orgon]. What? You think . . .

Orgon. Come, please, let's have no to-do.

Get out of my home without more ado.

Tartuffe. My intent . . .

Orgon. This is no time for sly repartee;

You must leave my house immediately.

Tartuffe. You must leave, you who speak as the master:

The house is mine, and you'd better learn fast or

I will show you that it's senseless to pick

A fight with me using this cowardly trick,

That it will get you nowhere to insult me,

And that I will punish your falsity,

Avenge God's wounds, and make you grieve

For talking here about forcing me to leave.

## SCENE VIII

Elmire, Orgon

Elmire. What is he saying and what is he after?  
Orgon. I'm ashamed to say this is no time for laughter.  
Elmire. Why?  
Orgon. I see my error by what he said;  
I gave him my lands. Something's wrong with my head!  
Elmire. You gave him . . .  
Orgon. Yes and they can't be restored,  
But there's something else that troubles me more.  
Elmire. What is that?  
Orgon. I'll tell you soon, but first there's  
A certain box I want to find upstairs.

ACT V

SCENE I

Orgon, Cleante

Cleante. Where are you rushing?  
Orgon. Who knows?  
Cleante. It might make sense  
To begin by having a conference  
About everything that has happened lately.  
Orgon. That box of papers troubles me greatly;  
More than all the rest, it's cause for distress.  
Cleante. Why are those papers important to possess?  
Orgon. My unfortunate friend Argus, when he  
Put them into my hands, swore me to secrecy.  
He chose to rely on me as he fled,  
And these papers, according to what he said,  
Are crucial to both his life and his wealth.  
Cleante. Then why didn't you keep them to yourself?  
Orgon. It was a matter of conscience, you see,  
So I consulted Tartuffe in secrecy,  
And his arguments came to persuade me  
That he should keep the box for security,  
So I could deny having it on hand.  
And thus I'd have a subterfuge on demand  
With which my conscience might muddle through  
In swearing to things that I knew weren't true.  
Cleante. You're in trouble, judging by appearances;  
Both the deed of gift and these confidences  
Are, to tell you my thoughts quite honestly,  
Measures that you took very thoughtlessly.  
They might put you in jail with such evidence,  
And since that man has it, it makes no sense  
To drive him away through your imprudence,  
You need to regain his full confidence.

Orgon. With what a fair appearance and touching zeal  
He hides a wicked soul and a heart of steel!  
And I, who received him begging and broke . . .  
That's it, I renounce all such pious folk.  
Henceforth, I will hold them as wholly evil  
And do my best to send them to the devil.

Cleante. It's just like you to get carried away!  
You can never stick to the middle way.  
To reason rightly is too much bother;  
You always rush from one excess to another.  
You can see your error and now you know  
That by a false zeal you were brought low.  
But to redeem yourself does logic demand  
That you embrace an error that's even more grand?  
And must you confuse the heart of a shill  
With the hearts of all the men of good will?  
Because a rascal had the luck or grace  
To dupe you with his austere and shining face,  
Must you believe everyone acts that way  
And no true church-man can be found today?  
Leave to libertines these foolish deductions.  
Seek true virtue, not a false deconstruction.  
Never rush into hasty admiration,  
And strive instead for moderation.  
If possible, don't admire false pretense,  
But also don't give true zeal cause for offense,  
And if you must fall to one extreme,  
Err in being too free with your esteem.

## SCENE II

Damis, Orgon, Cleante

Damis. Father, is it true that this cad threatens you,  
That he has forgotten the gifts that bound you two,  
And that his shameful pride, maddeningly,  
Has repaid your kindness with tyranny?

Orgon. Yes, son; he's brought me to the verge of tears.

Damis. Leave him to me. I'll cut off his ears.  
You must not flinch before his insolence  
For I'll soon restore your independence,  
And, to end the matter, I'll slice him like toast.

Cleante. That's exactly like a bratty boy's boast.  
Please make your angry words more moderate.  
We live during a time and in a state  
Where violent acts are clearly unlawful.

### SCENE III

Madame Pernelle, Mariane, Elmire, Dorine, Damis, Orgon, Cleante

Madame Pernelle. What's happening? The tales I'm told are awful.

Orgon. Novel things have been happening to me,

And for all my kindness, this is my fee.

I lift the man out of his misery;

Like a brother, I take him home with me;

Each day I treat him with greater largesse;

I give him my daughter and all I possess;

And at the same time the lying low-life

Looks for the best way to seduce my wife,

And, not fully content with what he's achieved,

He threatens me with the gifts he's received,

And he wishes to use, in ruining me,

Those profits he gained from my foolish bounty

To drive me from the home that I gave to him

And reduce me to the state that he was in.

Dorine. Poor man!

Madame Pernelle. Son, I don't believe he'd allow

Himself to take part in actions so foul.

Orgon. How's that?

Madame Pernelle. People always resent holy men.

Orgon. Mother, what were you trying to say just then?

Madame Pernelle. That in your home one sees the strangest things;

Among them is the hate that envy brings.

Orgon. How is it hate when I've told you the truth?

Madame Pernelle. I warned you often when you were a youth:

In this world virtue is oppressed forever;

The envious may die, but envy never.

Orgon. But what does this have to do with today?

Madame Pernelle. People are telling you lies and hearsay.

Orgon. I've already said that I myself saw it.

Madame Pernelle. The malice of gossips is infinite.

Orgon. You'll make me damn myself, Mother. I tell you

I saw with my eyes just what he would do.

Madame Pernelle. Some tongues always have some poison to spit,

And nothing on earth is safe against it.

Orgon. I do not know what these words of yours mean.

I've seen it, I say, seen, with these eyes seen--

Do you know the word, seen? Must I shout it

In your ears a hundred times and still you doubt it?

Madame Pernelle. Dear Lord! Appearances may be deceiving:

You shouldn't judge based on what you're perceiving.

Orgon. I'll go mad!

Madame Pernelle. People are prone to suspicion;

Misjudgment is part of the human condition.

Orgon. So I must interpret charitably

His desire to cuckold me?

Madame Pernelle. Don't you see

That to accuse a man you need just cause,

And until you're quite sure, you ought to pause.

Orgon. To be more certain, what would you advise?

Should I have waited until before my eyes

He had . . . You'll make me say something quite lewd.

Madame Pernelle. I'm sure that a holy zeal has imbued

His soul, and I can't begin to believe

That he would be willing to cheat or deceive.

Orgon. Leave me . . . I'm now so angry that if you

Were not my mother, I'm not sure what I'd do.

Dorine [to Orgon]. This is fair payment, sir, for what we received.

You wouldn't believe us; now you're not believed.

Cleante. We are wasting time on foolish pleasures

That would be better spent in active measures.

We should not ignore this swindler's threats.

Damis. What! Does his boldness have no boundaries yet?

Elmire. For myself, I don't believe it's possible;

His ingratitude would be too visible.

Cleante [to Orgon]. Don't put your faith in that. He will find ways

To gild with reason all the things he says;

And with less than this the people in power

Have forced their foes to cringe and cower.

I tell you again: well-armed as they are,

You should never have pushed him quite so far.

Orgon. True, but what could I do? Facing that bastard,

I felt resentment that I never mastered.

Cleante. I deeply desire to arrange between you

Some shadow of peace, however untrue.

Elmire. If I had known that he possessed such arms,

I would never have set off these alarms,

And my . . .

Orgon [to Dorine, seeing Monsieur Loyal enter]. What does this man want? Go and see.

I don't wish to have anyone meet with me!

#### SCENE IV

Monsieur Loyal, Madame Pernelle, Orgon, Damis, Mariane, Dorine, Elmire, Cleante

Monsieur Loyal [to Dorine]. Hello, my dear sister. Could you please see

If your master is in?

Dorine. He has company,

And I doubt he'll be able to see you now.

Monsieur Loyal. I have not come here to cause a row.

I don't think that my presence will displease  
Him; I come, in fact, to put him at ease.

Dorine. Your name?

Monsieur Loyal. Tell him only that I've come here  
For Monsieur Tartuffe, and to give him cheer.

Dorine [to Orgon]. It's a man who has come quite civilly,  
On behalf of Monsieur Tartuffe, to see,  
He says, to your pleasure.

Cleante [to Orgon]. You'd best find out  
Who he is and what he has come here about.

Orgon [to Cleante]. Perhaps he has come here to reconcile us.  
How should I act and what should we discuss?

Cleante. Don't let any of your anger appear,  
And if he speaks of a deal, make him be clear.

Monsieur Loyal [to Orgon]. Greetings, sir. May God destroy all your foes  
And favor you as much as I propose!

Orgon [aside to Cleante]. This civil start meets my approbation  
And foreshadows some accommodation.

Monsieur Loyal. At one time I was your father's employee,  
And this whole house is very dear to me.

Orgon. I ask your pardon, sir, but to my shame  
I'm totally ignorant of your name.

Monsieur Loyal. My name is Loyal. I come from Normandy.  
I'm the bailiff here, in spite of envy.  
For the last forty years, thanks be to God,  
I've done my duty and retained by job.  
And I've come to you, with your permission,  
To serve this notice of your eviction.

Orgon. What! You're here . . .

Monsieur Loyal. Let's have no irritation.  
This is nothing more than notification,  
An order to evict both you and yours,  
Put your furniture out and lock the doors,  
Without pardon or delay to fulfill . . .

Orgon. Me! Leave this place?

Monsieur Loyal. Yes, monsieur, if you will.  
This house now belongs, I have ample proof,  
To your very good friend, Monsieur Tartuffe.  
He is master and lord of all your wealth  
By virtue of a deed he showed me himself.  
It is in due form and cannot be doubted.

Damis [to Monsieur Loyal]. What impudence! I'm amazed about it.

Monsieur Loyal [to Damis]. You and I, sir, have no business and you'd  
Best leave things to this man [pointing to Orgon], who's civil and shrewd,  
And knows too well the duties of my office

To wish to oppose himself to justice.

Orgon. But . . .

Monsieur Loyal [to Orgon]. I know that not even a million  
Dollars would make you cause a rebellion,  
And that you will be an honest citizen  
And let me fulfill the orders I'm given.

Damis. You may soon feel upon your black soutane,  
Monsieur Bailiff, the heavy weight of this cane.

Monsieur Loyal [to Orgon]. Command your son to be quiet or depart,  
Monsieur; I would regret to have to report  
All this and make these matters more official.

Damis [aside]. This Monsieur Loyal seems quite disloyal!

Monsieur Loyal. For all worthy men there's a place in my heart,  
And I would not have wished, sir, to take part  
In this, except to lift some of your burden,  
By preventing the chore from falling to one  
Who might not share my opinion of you  
And who wouldn't proceed as gently as I do.

Orgon. And what could be worse than the evil crime  
Of evicting me?

Monsieur Loyal. I'm giving you time,  
And until morning I'll hold in abeyance  
The execution of this conveyance.  
I shall only come here with ten of my boys  
To spend the night, without scandal or noise.  
For the sake of form please bring to me, before  
You go up to bed, the keys to your door.  
I'll take care not to disrupt your repose  
And not to do anything you would oppose.  
But tomorrow morning you must get set  
To empty the house, down to the last brochette.  
My boys will assist you. Each one's a strong lout  
And will do all he can to help move you out.  
I'm doing my best to use common sense,  
And, since I'm treating you with such indulgence,  
I beg you, sir, to act the same way to me.  
Let no one bar me from doing my duty.

Orgon [aside]. With a happy heart I would at once pay  
The last hundred francs that are mine today  
For the power and pleasure of hitting his snout  
With one absolutely sensational clout.

Cleante [quietly, to Orgon]. Go easy, don't make things worse.

Damis. My hand itches  
To get in a fight with these sons of bitches.

Dorine. Monsieur Loyal, I think it might become you  
To have your broad back beaten black and blue.



Monsieur Loyal. These wicked words deserve condemnation,  
And women, too, may earn incarceration.  
Cleante [to Monsieur Loyal]. Let's end it now; that's enough for today.  
Hand over the paper, and be on your way.  
Monsieur Loyal. Until later, then. Heaven keep you in joy!  
Orgon. May it confound you, and your employer!

#### SCENE V

Orgon, Cleante, Mariane, Elmire, Madame Pernelle, Dorine, Damis

Orgon. There! You now see, mother, that I was right,  
And you can judge of the rest by this writ.  
Do you admit at last that he can lie?  
Madame Pernelle. It's as if a bolt has struck from the sky.  
Dorine [to Orgon]. You're wrong to complain, and wrong to blame him.  
These things show the grand plans of your seraphim.  
His neighborly love finds consummation  
In proving that wealth causes degradation,  
And from pure charity he wants to remove  
Every obstacle between you and God's love.  
Orgon. Shut up. . . . I'm always saying that to you.  
Cleante [to Orgon]. Let us consider what we ought to do.  
Elmire. We must expose this man's insolent acts.  
His deeds invalidate all the contracts.  
And his disloyalty will seem too plain  
If he tries to use them for personal gain.

#### SCENE VI

Valere, Orgon, Cleante, Elmire, Mariane, Madame Pernelle, Damis, Dorine

Valere. I'm sorry, sir, that I've come to distress you;  
But certain dangers may soon oppress you.  
A friend, whose love for me is deep and true  
And who knows how much I care about you,  
Has had enough courage to violate  
The secrecy of affairs of state  
And has just now sent me word that you might  
Be well-advised to take sudden flight.  
The villain who has been imposing on you  
Has gone to the Prince to accuse you too,  
And put into his hands, like a blade of hate,  
The vital papers of a traitor of State,  
Which he says that you've kept in secrecy  
Despite the duties of aristocracy.  
I don't know the details of the alleged crime,  
But a warrant against you has been signed,

And he himself is assigned to assist  
Those who will soon come to make the arrest.  
Cleante. Now his claims are well-armed; and the ingrate  
Seeks to become master of your estate.  
Orgon. I swear, that man is a vile animal!  
Valere. The slightest trifling could well be fatal.  
My coach is right here to take you away  
With a thousand louis that I've pledged to pay.  
Don't lose any time; the arrow has sped,  
And this is one blow that ought to be fled.  
I myself will guide you to a safe place  
And will stay with you to be sure there's no chase.  
Orgon. I owe you much for your solicitude!  
But there isn't time for my gratitude,  
And I pray to God to grant what I need  
So that one day I may repay this good deed.  
Farewell. The rest of you take care . . .  
Cleante. Go on.  
We'll look after everything when you're gone.

#### Final Scene

Police Officer, Tartuffe, Valere, Orgon, Elmire, Mariane, Madame Pernelle, Cleante, Damis, Dorine

Tartuffe [stopping Orgon]. Slowly, slowly, sir. You needn't run there.  
You won't have to go far to hide in your lair.  
In the Prince's name we will shackle you fast.  
Orgon. Traitor, you've kept this final shaft for last.  
This is the blow with which you dispatch me,  
And this is what crowns all your perfidy.  
Tartuffe. Your scorn causes me scant irritation;  
I bear it as a holy obligation.  
Cleante. This is scant sign of your moderation.  
Damis. How impudently the wretch mocks veneration!  
Tartuffe. None of your outbursts mean a thing to me,  
For I think of nothing but doing my duty.  
Mariane. Your pretense to honor is all a fake,  
And this is just the right job for you to take.  
Tartuffe. The task can only shower me with grace  
Since our Prince's command has sent me to this place.  
Orgon. But don't you recall how my charity  
Raised you, you ingrate, from your misery?  
Tartuffe. Yes, I know that I once received assistance,  
But my duty to the Prince demands this persistence:  
'Tis a sacred duty of such fortitude  
That it has suppressed all my gratitude,

And I would sacrifice to this powerful force  
Friends, wife, parents, and myself, of course.

Elmire. The hypocrite!

Dorine. How well he can create  
A treacherous cloak from all we venerate!

Cleante. But if this zeal which drives you and with which  
You plume yourself lifts you to a holy niche,  
Why is it that it didn't come to life  
Until after he caught you with his wife,  
And why did you only denounce him today  
After honor made him chase you away?  
I don't claim that the gift of all his estates  
Ought to distract you from duty's dictates,  
But if you planned to reveal his treason here,  
Why were you willing to take his wealth back there?

Tartuffe [to the Officer]. From all this noise, sir, please deliver me,  
And be so kind as to enforce your decree.

Police Officer. Yes, I've been rather slow to issue it.  
Your own mouth aptly invites me to do it;  
And so it will be done if you will come  
Straight to the jail that will be your new home.

Tartuffe. Who? Me, sir?

Police Officer. Yes, you.

Tartuffe. But why to prison?

Police Office. I need not explain to you my reason.  
[To Orgon.] Calm yourself, sir, after passions of such heat.  
We're ruled by a Prince who's a foe to deceit,  
A Prince whose eyes can read what the soul has writ,  
And who can't be fooled by a hypocrite.  
Blessed with a fine discernment, his great heart  
Always sees the whole picture, not just each part.  
Nothing can drive him to exaggeration;  
His firm reason clings to moderation.  
He confers on men of worth immortal glory;  
But that zeal is not blind or peremptory,  
And his love for what's true does not turn his eye  
From the power of falseness to horrify.  
This man here was unable to entrap him;  
His defenses are sound when such snares enwrap him.  
From the start, he pierced with his perceptive sight  
Through the veils that hid this evil from light.  
Tartuffe betrayed himself by accusing you,  
And, in divine justice, revealed his true  
Colors to the Prince as an infamous cad  
Whose deeds under another name were so bad  
That the record they made was wholly black

And Satan might use them as his almanac.  
In short, this king was revolted to see  
His ingratitude to you and disloyalty;  
To his other crimes, he has joined this one  
And has only allowed it so everyone  
Could see his audacity's evil ends  
And then see him required to make amends.  
All your papers, which the wretch has pawed through,  
Are here taken away and returned to you.  
With his sovereign power he will abrogate  
The contract by which you gave away your estate,  
And finally he pardons that secret offense  
Which you once committed through benevolence.  
This is the reward for the courage you showed  
In support of his rights in the late episode,  
And to demonstrate that, when least expected,  
One's past deeds may be recollected,  
That he will never forget a good deed,  
And that good outweighs evil in time of need.

Dorine. Heaven be praised!

Madame Pernelle. We're no longer distressed.

Elmire. What a happy ending!

Mariane. Who could have guessed?

Orgon [to Tartuffe, who the Officer is leading away]. Good. There you go, traitor . . .

Cleante. Ah! Brother, cease,  
And don't degenerate to indignities.  
Leave to himself this miserable clown,  
And don't add to the remorse that weighs him down.  
Hope instead that his heart may one day  
Make a happy return to the virtuous way,  
That he'll reform his life and lament his past,  
And cause our great Prince to temper justice at last.  
You should throw yourself on your knees in praise  
Of the kindness and lenience shown these days.

Orgon. Yes, that's well said. Let us kneel down with joy  
And praise the kind deeds of his envoy.  
Then, having acquitted part of our duty,  
Let's turn to address the claims of beauty,  
And by a fine wedding crown in Valere  
A lover who's both generous and sincere.

THE END



Poems from The Project Gutenberg EBook of *A Satire Anthology*, by Various

### **CHORUS OF WOMEN**

(\_From the "Thesmophoriazusæ."\_)  
\_Aristophanes.\_

THEY'RE always abusing the women,  
As a terrible plague to men;  
They say we're the root of all evil,  
And repeat it again and again--  
Of war, and quarrels, and bloodshed,  
All mischief, be what it may.  
And pray, then, why do you marry us,  
If we're all the plagues you say?  
And why do you take such care of us,  
And keep us so safe at home,  
And are never easy a moment  
If ever we chance to roam?  
When you ought to be thanking Heaven  
That your plague is out of the way,  
You all keep fussing and fretting--  
"Where is my Plague to-day?"  
If a Plague peeps out of the window,  
Up go the eyes of men;  
If she hides, then they all keep staring  
Until she looks out again.

### **SAINTSHIP VERSUS CONSCIENCE**

\_Samuel Butler.\_

"WHY didst thou choose that cursed sin,  
Hypocrisy, to set up in?"  
"Because it is the thriving'st calling,  
The only saints' bell that rings all in;  
In which all churches are concern'd,  
And is the easiest to be learn'd."

\* \* \* \*

Quoth he, "I am resolv'd to be  
Thy scholar in this mystery;  
And therefore first desire to know  
Some principles on which you go.  
What makes a knave a child of God,  
And one of us?" "A livelihood."  
"What renders beating out of brains,  
And murder, godliness?" "Great gains."  
"What's tender conscience?" "'Tis a botch  
That will not bear the gentlest touch;  
But, breaking out, despatches more  
Than th' epidemical'st plague-sore."  
"What makes y' encroach upon our trade,  
And damn all others?" "To be paid."  
"What's orthodox and true believing,  
Against a conscience?" "A good living."  
"What makes rebelling against kings  
A good old cause?" "Administ'rings."  
"What makes all doctrines plain and clear?"  
"About two hundred pounds a year."  
"And that which was prov'd true before,  
Prov'd false again?" "Two hundred more."  
"What makes the breaking of all oaths  
A holy duty?" "Food and clothes."  
"What, laws and freedom, persecution?"  
"Being out of power and contribution."  
"What makes a church a den of thieves?"  
"A dean and chapter, and white sleeves."  
"And what would serve, if these were gone,  
To make it orthodox?" "Our own."  
"What makes morality a crime,  
The most notorious of the time;  
Morality, which both the saints  
And wicked, too, cry out against?"  
"'Cause grace and virtue are within  
Prohibited degrees of kin;  
And therefore no true saint allows  
They shall be suffered to espouse."

## THE NET OF LAW

by James Jeffrey Roche

THE net of law is spread so wide,  
No sinner from its sweep may hide.

Its meshes are so fine and strong,  
They take in every child of wrong.

O wondrous web of mystery!  
Big fish alone escape from thee!

**James Jeffrey Roche.**



## JOE

from The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Men I'm Not Married To*, by Dorothy Parker

After Joe had had two cocktails he wanted to go up and bat for the trap drummer. After he had had three he began to get personal about the unattractive shade of the necktie worn by the strange man at the next table.

## REGINALD ON HOUSE-PARTIES

The Project Gutenberg eBook, *Reginald*, by Saki

The drawback is, one never really knows one's hosts and hostesses. One gets to know their fox-terriers and their chrysanthemums, and whether the story about the go-cart can be turned loose in the drawing-room, or must be told privately to each member of the party, for fear of shocking public opinion; but one's host and hostess are a sort of human hinterland that one never has the time to explore.

There was a fellow I stayed with once in Warwickshire who farmed his own land, but was otherwise quite steady. Should never have suspected him of

having a soul, yet not very long afterwards he eloped with a lion-tamer's widow and set up as a golf-instructor somewhere on the Persian Gulf; dreadfully immoral, of course, because he was only an indifferent player, but still, it showed imagination. His wife was really to be pitied, because he had been the only person in the house who understood how to manage the cook's temper, and now she has to put "D.V." on her dinner invitations. Still, that's better than a domestic scandal; a woman who leaves her cook never wholly recovers her position in Society.

I suppose the same thing holds good with the hosts; they seldom have more than a superficial acquaintance with their guests, and so often just when they do get to know you a bit better, they leave off knowing you altogether. There was \_rather\_ a breath of winter in the air when I left those Dorsetshire people. You see, they had asked me down to shoot, and I'm not particularly immense at that sort of thing. There's such a deadly sameness about partridges; when you've missed one, you've missed the lot--at least, that's been my experience. And they tried to rag me in the smoking-room about not being able to hit a bird at five yards, a sort of bovine ragging that suggested cows buzzing round a gadfly and thinking they were teasing it. So I got up the next morning at early dawn--I know it was dawn, because there were lark-noises in the sky, and the grass looked as if it had been left out all night--and hunted up the most conspicuous thing in the bird line that I could find, and measured the distance, as nearly as it would let me, and shot away all I knew. They said afterwards that it was a tame bird; that's simply \_silly\_, because it was awfully wild at the first few shots. Afterwards it quieted down a bit, and when its legs had stopped waving farewells to the landscape I got a gardener-boy to drag it into the hall, where everybody must see it on their way to the breakfast-room. I breakfasted upstairs myself. I gathered afterwards that the meal was tinged with a very unchristian spirit. I suppose it's unlucky to bring peacock's feathers into a house; anyway, there was a blue-pencilly look in my hostess's eye when I took my departure.

Some hostesses, of course, will forgive anything, even unto pavonicide (is there such a word?), as long as one is nice-looking and sufficiently unusual to counterbalance some of the others; and there \_are\_ others--the girl, for instance, who reads Meredith, and appears at meals with unnatural punctuality in a frock that's made at home and repented at leisure. She eventually finds her way to India and gets married, and comes home to admire the Royal Academy, and to imagine that an indifferent prawn curry is for ever an effective substitute for all that we have been taught to believe is luncheon. It's then that she is really dangerous; but at her worst she is never quite so bad as the woman who fires \_Exchange and Mart\_ questions at you without the least provocation. Imagine the other day, just when I was doing my best to understand half



the things I was saying, being asked by one of those seekers after country home truths how many fowls she could keep in a run ten feet by six, or whatever it was! I told her whole crowds, as long as she kept the door shut, and the idea didn't seem to have struck her before; at least, she brooded over it for the rest of dinner.

Of course, as I say, one never really knows one's ground, and one may make mistakes occasionally. But then one's mistakes sometimes turn out assets in the long-run: if we had never bungled away our American colonies we might never have had the boy from the States to teach us how to wear our hair and cut our clothes, and we must get our ideas from somewhere, I suppose. Even the Hooligan was probably invented in China centuries before we thought of him. England must wake up, as the Duke of Devonshire said the other day; wasn't it? Oh, well, it was someone else. Not that I ever indulge in despair about the Future; there always have been men who have gone about despairing of the Future, and when the Future arrives it says nice, superior things about their having acted according to their lights. It is dreadful to think that other people's grandchildren may one day rise up and call one amiable.

There are moments when one sympathises with Herod.



## THE PUTNAM TRADITION

By Sonya Dorman

*\_Through generations  
the power has descended,  
now weaker, now stronger.  
And which way did the  
power run in the four-year-old  
in the garden, playing  
with a pie plate?\_*

It was an old house not far from the coast, and had descended generation by generation to the women of the Putnam family. Progress literally went by it: a new four-lane highway had been built two hundred yards from the ancient lilacs at the doorstep. Long before that, in the time of Cecily Putnam's husband, power lines had been run in, and now on cold nights the telephone wires sounded like a concert of cellos, while inside with a sound like the breaking of beetles, the grandmother Cecily moved through the walls in the grooves of tradition.

Simone Putnam, her granddaughter; Nina Putnam, her great-granddaughter; the unbroken succession of matriarchs continued, but times the old woman thought that in Simone it was weakened, and she looked at the four-year-old Nina askance, waiting, waiting, for some good sign.

Sometimes one of the Putnam women had given birth to a son, who grew sickly and died, or less often, grew healthy and fled. The husbands were usually strangers to the land, the house, and the women, and spent a lifetime with the long-lived Putnam wives, and died, leaving their strange signs: telephone wires, electric lights, water pumps, brass plumbing.

Sam Harris came and married Simone, bringing with him an invasion of washer, dryer, toaster, mixer, coffeemaker, until the current poured through the walls of the house with more vigor than the blood in the old woman's veins.

"You don't approve of him," Simone said to her grandmother.

"It's his trade," Cecily Putnam answered. "Our men have been carpenters, or farmers, or even schoolmasters. But an engineer. Phui!"

Simone was washing the dishes, gazing out across the windowsill where two pink and white Murex shells stood, to the tidy garden beyond where Nina was engaged in her private games.

She dried the dishes by passing her hand once above each plate or glass, bringing it to a dry sparkle. It saved wear on the dishtowels, and it amused her.

"Sam's not home very much," she said in a placating voice. She herself had grown terrified, since her marriage, that she wouldn't be able to bear the weight of her past. She felt its power on her and couldn't carry it. Cecily had brought her up, after her father had disappeared and her mother had died in an unexplained accident. Daily she saw the

reflection of her failure in the face of her grandmother, who seemed built of the same seasoned and secure wood as the old Putnam house. Simone looked at her grandmother, whom she loved, and became a mere vapor.

"He's not home so much," Simone said.

\* \* \* \* \*

Her face was small, with a pointed chin, and she had golden-red hair which she wore loose on her shoulders. Nina, too, had a small face, but it was neither so pale nor so delicate as her mother's, as if Sam's tougher substance had filled her out and strengthened her bone structure. If it was true that she, Simone, was a weak link, then Sam's strength might have poured into the child, and there would be no more Putnam family and tradition.

"People don't change that easily," the old woman said.

"But things--" Simone began. The china which had a history of five generations slipped out of her hands and smashed; Sam's toaster wouldn't toast or pop up; Simone couldn't even use the telephone for fear of getting a wrong number, or no number at all.

"Things, things!" her grandmother cried. "It's blood that counts. If the blood is strong enough, things dissolve. They're just garbage, all those things, floating on the surface of our history. It's our history that's deep. That's what counts."

"You're afraid of Sam," the young woman accused.

"Not afraid of any man!" Cecily said, straightening her back. "But I'm afraid for the child. Sam has no family tradition, no depth, no talent handed down and perfected. A man with his head full of wheels and wires."

Simone loved him. She leaned on him and grew about him, and he supported her tenderly. She wasn't going to give him up for the sake of some abstract tradition--

--it's not abstract," her grandmother said with spirit. "It's in your blood. Or why don't you sweep the floors the way other women do? The way Sam's mother must?"

Simone had begun to clean the house while she was thinking, moving her hand horizontally across the floor, at the height of her hip, and the

dust was following the motion of her hand and moving in a small, sun-brightened river toward the trash basket in the kitchen corner. Now Simone raised her hand to her face to look at it, and the river of dust rose like a serpent and hung a foot below her hand.

"Yes," she agreed, "at least I can clean the house. If I don't touch the good china, and look where I'm going."

"Phui," the old woman said again, angrily. "Don't feel so sorry for yourself."

"Not for myself," Simone mumbled, and looked again toward the garden where her daughter was doing something with three stones and a pie plate full of spring water.

"I do despair of Nina," Cecily said, as she had said before. "She's four, and has no appearance. Not even balance. She fell out of the applerose tree, and couldn't even help herself." Suddenly the old woman thrust her face close to her granddaughter. It was smooth, round, and sweet as a young kernel of corn. The eyes, sunk down under the bushy grey brows, were cold and clear grey.

"Simone," the old woman said. "You didn't lie to me? You did know she was falling, and couldn't get back in time to catch her?"

A shudder passed through Simone's body. There was no blood in her veins, only water; no marrow in her bones, they were empty, and porous as a bird's. Even the roots of her hair were weak, and now the sweat was starting out on her scalp as she faced her grandmother and saw the bristling shapes of seven generations of Putnam women behind her.

"You lied," the old woman said. "You didn't know she was falling."

Simone was a vapor, a mere froth blowing away on the first breeze.

"My poor dear," the old woman said in a gentle voice. "But how could you marry someone like Sam? Don't you know what will happen? He'll dissolve us, our history, our talents, our pride. Nina is nothing but an ordinary little child."

"She's a good child," Simone said, trying not to be angry. She wanted her child to be loved, to be strong. "Nina isn't a common child," she said, with her head bent. "She's very bright."

"A man with his head full of wheels, who's at home with electricity and wires," the old woman went on. "We've had them before, but never allowed

them to dominate us. My own husband was such a man, but he was only allowed to make token gestures, such as having the power lines put in. He never understood how they worked." She lowered her voice to a whisper, "Your Sam understands. I've heard him talk to the water pump."

"That's why you're afraid of him," Simone said. "Not because I'm weak, and he might take something away from me, but because he's strong, and he might give us something. Then everything would change, and you're afraid of that. Nina might be our change." She pointed toward the garden.

\* \* \* \* \*

Following the white line of her granddaughter's finger, Cecily looked out into the garden and saw Nina turn toward them as though she knew they were angry. The child pointed with one finger directly at them in the house. There was a sharp crackle, and something of a brilliant and vibrating blue leaped between the out-stretched fingers of mother and daughter, and flew up like a bird to the power lines above.

"Mommy," Nina called.

Simone's heart nearly broke with wonder and fright. Her grandmother contemptuously passed through the kitchen door and emerged on the step outside, but Simone opened the door and left it open behind her. "What was that?" she asked Nina. "Was it a bluebird?"

"Don't be silly," Nina said. She picked up the pie plate and brought it toward them. Cecily's face was white and translucent, one hand went to her throat as the child approached.

Brimfull of crackling blue fire with a fluctuating heart of yellow, the pie plate came toward them, held between Nina's small, dusty hands. Nina grinned at them. "I stole it out of the wires," she said.

Simone thought she would faint with a mixture of joy and fear. "Put it back," she whispered. "Please put it back."

"Oh Mommy," Nina said, beginning to whine. "Not now. Not right away. I just got it. I've done it lots of times." The pie plate crackled and hissed in the steady, small hands.

Simone could feel the old woman's shocked silence behind her. "You mustn't carry it in a pie plate, it's dangerous," Simone said to her child, but she could see Nina was in no danger. "How often have you done this?" She could feel her skirt and her hair billow with electricity.

"Lots of times. You don't like it, do you?" She became teasing and roguish, when she looked most like Sam. Suddenly she threw back her head and opened her mouth, and tilting up the pie plate she drank it empty. Her reddish gold hair sprang out in crackling rays around her face, her eyes flashed and sparks flew out between her teeth before she closed her mouth.

"Nina!" the old woman cried, and began to crumple, falling slowly against Simone in a complete faint. Simone caught her in trembling hands and lowered her gently. She said to her daughter, "You mustn't do that in front of Grandy. You're a bad girl, you knew it would scare her," and to herself she said: I must stop babbling, the child knows I'm being silly. O isn't it wonderful, isn't it awful, O Sam, how I love you.

"Daddy said it would scare you," Nina admitted. "That's why I never showed you before." Her hair was softly falling into place again, and she was gazing curiously at her great-grandmother lying on the doorstep.

"It did scare me," Simone said. "I'm not used to it, darling. But don't keep it secret any more."

"Is Grandy asleep?"

Simone said hastily, "Oh yes, she's taking a nap. She is old, you know, and likes to take naps."

"That's not a nap," Nina said, leaning over and patting the old woman's cheek, "I think she's having a bad dream."

Simone carried her grandmother into the house. If that old, tired heart had jumped and floundered like her own, there must be some damage done to it. If anything happened to her grandmother, the world would end, Simone thought, and was furious with Nina, and at the same time, full of joy for her.

Cecily Putnam opened her eyes widely, and Simone said, "It does change, you see. But it's in the family, after all."

The old woman sat upright quickly. "That wicked child!" she exclaimed. "To come and frighten us like that. She ought to be spanked." She got up with great strength and rushed out to the garden.

"Nina!" she called imperiously. The child picked up one of the small stones from the pie plate now full of spring water, and came to her great-grandmother.

"I'll make something for you, Grandy," she said seriously. She put the stone in the palm of her hand, and breathed on it, and then held out her hand and offered the diamond.

"It's lovely. Thank you," the old woman said with dignity, and put her hand on the child's head. "Let's go for a walk and I'll show you how to grow rose-apples. That's more becoming to a young lady."

"You slept on the step."

"Ah! I'm old and I like to take little naps," Cecily answered.

Simone saw them disappear among the applerose trees side by side. She was still trembling, but gradually, as she passed her hand back and forth, and the dust followed, moving in a sparkling river toward the trash basket, Simone stopped trembling and began to smile with the natural pride of a Putnam woman.

THE END

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## DRUNKENNESS

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Young Gentleman and Lady's Monitor, and English Teacher's Assistant*, by John Hamilton Moore

1. No vices are so incurable as those which men are apt to glory in. One would wonder how drunkenness should have the good luck to be of this number. Anarcharsis, being invited to a match of drinking at Corinth,

demanded the prize very humourously, because he was drunk before any of the rest of the company, for, says he, when we run a race, he who arrives at the goal first, is entitled to the reward:

2. On the contrary, in this thirsty generation, the honour falls upon him who carries off the greatest quantity of liquor, and knocks down the rest of the company. I was the other day with honest \_Will Funnell\_, the West Saxon, who was reckoning up how much liquor had passed through him in the last twenty years of his life, which, according to his computation, amounted to twenty-three hogsheads of October, four ton of port, half a kilderkin of small-beer, nineteen barrels of cyder, and three glasses of champagne; besides which he had assisted at four hundred bowls of punch, not to mention sips, drams, and whets without number.

3. I question not but every reader's memory will suggest to him several ambitious young men, who are as vain in this particular as \_Will Funnell\_, and can boast of as glorious exploits.

Our modern philosophers observe, that there is a general decay of moisture in the globe of the earth. This they chiefly ascribe to the growth of vegetables, which incorporate into their own substance many fluid bodies that never return again to their former nature:

4. But with submission, they ought to throw into their account, those innumerable rational beings which fetch their nourishment chiefly out of liquids: especially when we consider that men, compared with their fellow-creatures, drink much more than comes to their share.

5. But however highly this tribe of people may think of themselves, a drunken man is a greater monster than any that is to be found among all the creatures which God has made; as indeed there is no character which appears more despicable and deformed, in the eyes of all reasonable persons, than that of a drunkard.

6. \_Bonosus\_, one of our own countrymen, who was addicted to this vice, having set up for a share in the Roman empire, and being defeated in a great battle, hanged himself. When he was seen by the army in this melancholy situation, notwithstanding he had behaved himself very bravely, the common jest was, that the thing they saw hanging upon the tree before them, was not a man, but a bottle.

7. This vice has very fatal effects on the mind, the body and fortune of the person who is devoted to it.

In regard to the mind, it first of all discovers every flaw in it. The



sober man, by the strength of reason, may keep under and subdue every vice or folly to which he is most inclined; but wine makes every latent seed sprout up in the soul, and shew itself: it gives fury to the passions, and force to those objects which are apt to produce them.

8. When a young fellow complained to an old philosopher that his wife was not handsome; Put less water into your wine, says the philosopher, and you'll quickly make her so. Wine heightens indifference into love, love into jealousy, and jealousy into madness. It often turns the good natured man into an idiot, and the choleric into an assassin. It gives bitterness to resentment, it makes vanity insupportable, and displays every little spot of the soul in its utmost deformity.

9. Nor does this vice only betray the hidden faults of a man, and shew them in most odious colours, but often occasions faults to which he is not naturally subject. There is more of turn than of truth in a saying of \_Seneca\_, that drunkenness does not produce, but discover faults. Common experience teaches the contrary.

10. Wine throws a man out of himself, and infuses qualities into the mind, which she is a stranger to in her sober moments. The person you converse with, after the third bottle, is not the same man who at first sat down at the table with you. Upon this maxim is founded one of the prettiest sayings I ever met with, which is inscribed to \_Publius Syrus\_, He who jests unto a man that is drunk, injures the absent\_.

11. Thus does drunkenness act in direct contradiction to reason, whose business it is to clear the mind of every vice which is crept into it, and to guard it against all the approaches of any that endeavour to make its entrance. But besides these ill effects which this vice produces in the person who is actually under its dominion, it has also a bad influence on the mind, even in its sober moments, as it insensibly weakens the understanding, impairs the memory, and makes those faults habitual which are produced by frequent excesses: it wastes the estate, banishes reputation, consumes the body, and renders a man of the brightest parts the common jest of an insignificant clown.

12. A method of spending one's time agreeably is a thing so little studied, that the common amusement of our young gentlemen (especially of such as are at a great distance from those of the first breeding) is drinking. This way of entertainment has custom on its side; but as much as it has prevailed, I believe there have been very few companies that have been guilty of excess this way, where there have not happened more accidents which make against, than for the continuance of it.

13. It is very common that events arise from a debauch which are fatal,

and always such as are disagreeable. With all a man's reason and good sense about him, his tongue is apt to utter things out of a mere gaiety of heart, which may displease his best friends. Who then would trust himself to the power of wine, without saying more against it, than, that it raises the imagination and depresses judgment?

14. Were there only this single consideration, that we are less masters of ourselves when we drink in the least proportion above the exigencies of thirst: I say, were this all that could be objected, it were sufficient to make us abhor this vice. But we may go on to say, that as he who drinks but a little is not master of himself, so he who drinks much is a slave to himself.

15. As for my part, I ever esteemed a drunkard of all vicious persons the most vicious: for if our actions are to be weighed and considered according to the intention of them, what can we think of him who puts himself into a circumstance wherein he can have no intention at all, but incapacitates himself for the duties and offices of life, by a suspension of all his faculties.

16. If a man considers that he cannot, under the oppression of drink, be a friend, a gentleman, a master, or a subject; that he has so long banished himself from all that is dear, and given up all that is sacred to him, he would even then think of a debauch with horror; but when he looks still further, and acknowledges that he is not only expelled out of all the relations of life, but also liable to offend against them all, what words can express the terror and detestation he would have of such a condition? And yet he owns all this of himself who says he was drunk last night.

17. As I have all along persisted in it, that all the vicious in general are in a state of death, so I think I may add to the non-existence of drunkards that they died by their own hands. He is certainly as guilty of suicide who perishes by a slow, as he that is dispatched by an immediate poison.

18. In my last lucubration I proposed the general use of water-gruel, and hinted that it might not be amiss at this very season: but as there are some, whose cases, in regard to their families, will not admit of delay, I have used my interest in several wards of the city, that the wholesome restorative above-mentioned may be given in tavern kitchens to all the mornings draught-men within the walls when they call for wine before noon.

19. For a further restraint and mark upon such persons, I have given orders, that in all the officers where policies are drawn upon lives, it

shall be added to the article which prohibits that the nominee should cross the sea, the words, \_Provided also, That the above-mentioned\_ A.B. \_shall not drink before dinner during the term mentioned in this indenture\_.

20. I am not without hopes that by this method I shall bring some unsizeable friends of mine into shape and breadth, as well as others who are languid and consumptive into health and vigour. Most of the self-murderers whom I yet hinted at, are such as preserve a certain regularity in taking their poison, and make it mix pretty well with their food:

21. But the most conspicuous of those who destroy themselves, are such as in their youth fall into this sort of debauchery, and contract a certain uneasiness of spirit, which is not to be diverted but by tippling as often as they can fall into company in the day, and conclude with down-right drunkenness at night. These gentlemen never know the satisfaction of youth, but skip the years of manhood, and are decrepid soon after they are of age.

22. I was godfather to one of these old fellows. He is now three and thirty, which is the grand climacteric of a young drunkard. I went to visit the crazy wretch this morning, with no other purpose but to rally him, under the pain and uneasiness of being sober.

But as our faults are double when they effect others besides ourselves, so this vice is still more odious in a married than a single man.

23. He that is the husband of a woman of honour, and comes home overloaded with wine, is still more contemptible, in proportion to the regard we have to the unhappy consort of his bestiality. The imagination cannot shape to itself any thing more monstrous and unnatural, than the familiarities between drunkenness and chastity. The wretched \_Astræa\_, who is the perfection of beauty and innocence, has long been thus condemned for life. The romantic tales of virgins devoted to the jaws of monsters, have nothing in them so terrible, as the gift of \_Astræa\_ to that bacchanal.

24. The reflection of such a match as spotless innocence with abandoned lewdness, is what puts this vice in the worst figure it can bear with regard to others; but when it is looked upon with respect only to the drunkard himself, it has deformities enough to make it disagreeable, which may be summed up in a word, by allowing, that he who resigns his reason, is actually guilty of all that he is liable to from the want of reason.



## OBSERVATIONS ON THE STATE OF DEGRADATION TO WHICH WOMAN IS REDUCED BY VARIOUS CAUSES.

From The Project Gutenberg Etext of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*,  
by Mary Wollstonecraft

That woman is naturally weak, or degraded by a concurrence of circumstances is, I think, clear. But this position I shall simply contrast with a conclusion, which I have frequently heard fall from sensible men in favour of an aristocracy: that the mass of mankind cannot be any thing, or the obsequious slaves, who patiently allow themselves to be penned up, would feel their own consequence, and spurn their chains. Men, they further observe, submit every where to oppression, when they have only to lift up their heads to throw off the yoke; yet, instead of asserting their birthright, they quietly lick the dust, and say, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. Women, I argue from analogy, are degraded by the same propensity to enjoy the present moment; and, at last, despise the freedom which they have not sufficient virtue to struggle to attain. But I must be more explicit.

With respect to the culture of the heart, it is unanimously allowed that sex is out of the question; but the line of subordination in the mental powers is never to be passed over. Only "absolute in loveliness," the portion of rationality granted to woman is, indeed, very scanty; for, denying her genius and judgment, it is scarcely possible to divine what remains to characterize intellect.

The stamina of immortality, if I may be allowed the phrase, is the perfectibility of human reason; for, was man created perfect, or did a flood of knowledge break in upon him, when he arrived at maturity, that precluded error, I should doubt whether his existence would be continued after the dissolution of the body. But in the present state of things, every difficulty in morals, that escapes from human discussion, and equally baffles the investigation of profound thinking, and the lightning glance of genius, is an argument on which I build my belief of the immortality of the soul. Reason is, consequentially, the simple

power of improvement; or, more properly speaking, of discerning truth. Every individual is in this respect a world in itself. More or less may be conspicuous in one being than other; but the nature of reason must be the same in all, if it be an emanation of divinity, the tie that connects the creature with the Creator; for, can that soul be stamped with the heavenly image, that is not perfected by the exercise of its own reason? Yet outwardly ornamented with elaborate care, and so adorned to delight man, "that with honour he may love," (Vide Milton) the soul of woman is not allowed to have this distinction, and man, ever placed between her and reason, she is always represented as only created to see through a gross medium, and to take things on trust. But, dismissing these fanciful theories, and considering woman as a whole, let it be what it will, instead of a part of man, the inquiry is, whether she has reason or not. If she has, which, for a moment, I will take for granted, she was not created merely to be the solace of man, and the sexual should not destroy the human character.

Into this error men have, probably, been led by viewing education in a false light; not considering it as the first step to form a being advancing gradually toward perfection; (This word is not strictly just, but I cannot find a better.) but only as a preparation for life. On this sensual error, for I must call it so, has the false system of female manners been reared, which robs the whole sex of its dignity, and classes the brown and fair with the smiling flowers that only adorn the land. This has ever been the language of men, and the fear of departing from a supposed sexual character, has made even women of superior sense adopt the same sentiments. Thus understanding, strictly speaking, has been denied to woman; and instinct, sublimated into wit and cunning, for the purposes of life, has been substituted in its stead.

The power of generalizing ideas, of drawing comprehensive conclusions from individual observations, is the only acquirement for an immortal being, that really deserves the name of knowledge. Merely to observe, without endeavouring to account for any thing, may, (in a very incomplete manner) serve as the common sense of life; but where is the store laid up that is to clothe the soul when it leaves the body?

This power has not only been denied to women; but writers have insisted that it is inconsistent, with a few exceptions, with their sexual character. Let men prove this, and I shall grant that woman only exists for man. I must, however, previously remark, that the power of generalizing ideas, to any great extent, is not very

common amongst men or women. But this exercise is the true cultivation of the understanding; and every thing conspires to render the cultivation of the understanding more difficult in the female than the male world.

I am naturally led by this assertion to the main subject of the present chapter, and shall now attempt to point out some of the causes that degrade the sex, and prevent women from generalizing their observations.

I shall not go back to the remote annals of antiquity to trace the history of woman; it is sufficient to allow, that she has always been either a slave or a despot, and to remark, that each of these situations equally retards the progress of reason. The grand source of female folly and vice has ever appeared to me to arise from narrowness of mind; and the very constitution of civil governments has put almost insuperable obstacles in the way to prevent the cultivation of the female understanding: yet virtue can be built on no other foundation! The same obstacles are thrown in the way of the rich, and the same consequences ensue.

Necessity has been proverbially termed the mother of invention; the aphorism may be extended to virtue. It is an acquirement, and an acquirement to which pleasure must be sacrificed, and who sacrifices pleasure when it is within the grasp, whose mind has not been opened and strengthened by adversity, or the pursuit of knowledge goaded on by necessity? Happy is it when people have the cares of life to struggle with; for these struggles prevent their becoming a prey to enervating vices, merely from idleness! But, if from their birth men and women are placed in a torrid zone, with the meridian sun of pleasure darting directly upon them, how can they sufficiently brace their minds to discharge the duties of life, or even to relish the affections that carry them out of themselves?

Pleasure is the business of a woman's life, according to the present modification of society, and while it continues to be so, little can be expected from such weak beings. Inheriting, in a lineal descent from the first fair defect in nature, the sovereignty of beauty, they have, to maintain their power, resigned their natural rights, which the exercise of reason, might have procured them, and chosen rather to be short-lived queens than labour to attain the sober pleasures that arise from equality. Exalted by their inferiority (this sounds like a contradiction) they constantly demand homage as women, though experience should teach them that the men who pride themselves upon paying this

arbitrary insolent respect to the sex, with the most scrupulous exactness, are most inclined to tyrannize over, and despise the very weakness they cherish. Often do they repeat Mr. Hume's sentiments; when comparing the French and Athenian character, he alludes to women. "But what is more singular in this whimsical nation, say I to the Athenians, is, that a frolic of yours during the Saturnalia, when the slaves are served by their masters, is seriously continued by them through the whole year, and through the whole course of their lives; accompanied too with some circumstances, which still further augment the absurdity and ridicule. Your sport only elevates for a few days, those whom fortune has thrown down, and whom she too, in sport, may really elevate forever above you. But this nation gravely exalts those, whom nature has subjected to them, and whose inferiority and infirmities are absolutely incurable. The women, though without virtue, are their masters and sovereigns."

Ah! why do women, I write with affectionate solicitude, condescend to receive a degree of attention and respect from strangers, different from that reciprocation of civility which the dictates of humanity, and the politeness of civilization authorise between man and man? And why do they not discover, when "in the noon of beauty's power," that they are treated like queens only to be deluded by hollow respect, till they are led to resign, or not assume, their natural prerogatives? Confined then in cages, like the feathered race, they have nothing to do but to plume themselves, and stalk with mock-majesty from perch to perch. It is true, they are provided with food and raiment, for which they neither toil nor spin; but health, liberty, and virtue are given in exchange. But, where, amongst mankind has been found sufficient strength of mind to enable a being to resign these adventitious prerogatives; one who rising with the calm dignity of reason above opinion, dared to be proud of the privileges inherent in man? and it is vain to expect it whilst hereditary power chokes the affections, and nips reason in the bud.

The passions of men have thus placed women on thrones; and, till mankind become more reasonable, it is to be feared that women will avail themselves of the power which they attain with the least exertion, and which is the most indisputable. They will smile, yes, they will smile, though told that--

"In beauty's empire is no mean,  
And woman either slave or queen,  
Is quickly scorn'd when not ador'd."

But the adoration comes first, and the scorn is not anticipated.

Lewis the XIVth, in particular, spread factitious manners, and caught in a specious way, the whole nation in his toils; for establishing an artful chain of despotism, he made it the interest of the people at large, individually to respect his station, and support his power. And women, whom he flattered by a puerile attention to the whole sex, obtained in his reign that prince-like distinction so fatal to reason and virtue.

A king is always a king, and a woman always a woman: (And a wit, always a wit, might be added; for the vain fooleries of wits and beauties to obtain attention, and make conquests, are much upon a par.) his authority and her sex, ever stand between them and rational converse. With a lover, I grant she should be so, and her sensibility will naturally lead her to endeavour to excite emotion, not to gratify her vanity but her heart. This I do not allow to be coquetry, it is the artless impulse of nature, I only exclaim against the sexual desire of conquest, when the heart is out of the question.

This desire is not confined to women; "I have endeavoured," says Lord Chesterfield, "to gain the hearts of twenty women, whose persons I would not have given a fig for." The libertine who in a gust of passion, takes advantage of unsuspecting tenderness, is a saint when compared with this cold-hearted rascal; for I like to use significant words. Yet only taught to please, women are always on the watch to please, and with true heroic ardour endeavour to gain hearts merely to resign, or spurn them, when the victory is decided, and conspicuous.

I must descend to the minutiae of the subject.

I lament that women are systematically degraded by receiving the trivial attentions, which men think it manly to pay to the sex, when, in fact, they are insultingly supporting their own superiority. It is not condescension to bow to an inferior. So ludicrous, in fact, do these ceremonies appear to me, that I scarcely am able to govern my muscles, when I see a man start with eager, and serious solicitude to lift a handkerchief, or shut a door, when the LADY could have done it herself, had she only moved a pace or two.

A wild wish has just flown from my heart to my head, and I will not stifle it though it may excite a horse laugh. I do earnestly wish to see the distinction of sex confounded in society, unless where



love animates the behaviour. For this distinction is, I am firmly persuaded, the foundation of the weakness of character ascribed to woman; is the cause why the understanding is neglected, whilst accomplishments are acquired with sedulous care: and the same cause accounts for their preferring the graceful before the heroic virtues.

Mankind, including every description, wish to be loved and respected for SOMETHING; and the common herd will always take the nearest road to the completion of their wishes. The respect paid to wealth and beauty is the most certain and unequivocal; and of course, will always attract the vulgar eye of common minds. Abilities and virtues are absolutely necessary to raise men from the middle rank of life into notice; and the natural consequence is notorious, the middle rank contains most virtue and abilities. Men have thus, in one station, at least, an opportunity of exerting themselves with dignity, and of rising by the exertions which really improve a rational creature; but the whole female sex are, till their character is formed, in the same condition as the rich: for they are born, I now speak of a state of civilization, with certain sexual privileges, and whilst they are gratuitously granted them, few will ever think of works of supererogation, to obtain the esteem of a small number of superior people.

When do we hear of women, who starting out of obscurity, boldly claim respect on account of their great abilities or daring virtues? Where are they to be found? "To be observed, to be attended to, to be taken notice of with sympathy, complacency, and approbation, are all the advantages which they seek." True! my male readers will probably exclaim; but let them, before they draw any conclusion, recollect, that this was not written originally as descriptive of women, but of the rich. In Dr. Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments, I have found a general character of people of rank and fortune, that in my opinion, might with the greatest propriety be applied to the female sex. I refer the sagacious reader to the whole comparison; but must be allowed to quote a passage to enforce an argument that I mean to insist on, as the one most conclusive against a sexual character. For if, excepting warriors, no great men of any denomination, have ever appeared amongst the nobility, may it not be fairly inferred, that their local situation swallowed up the man, and produced a character similar to that of women, who are LOCALIZED, if I may be allowed the word, by the rank they are placed in, by COURTESY? Women, commonly called Ladies, are not to be contradicted in company, are not allowed to exert any manual strength; and from them the negative virtues only are expected, when any virtues are expected,

patience, docility, good-humour, and flexibility; virtues incompatible with any vigorous exertion of intellect. Besides by living more with each other, and to being seldom absolutely alone, they are more under the influence of sentiments than passions. Solitude and reflection are necessary to give to wishes the force of passions, and enable the imagination to enlarge the object and make it the most desirable. The same may be said of the rich; they do not sufficiently deal in general ideas, collected by impassionate thinking, or calm investigation, to acquire that strength of character, on which great resolves are built. But hear what an acute observer says of the great.

"Do the great seem insensible of the easy price at which they may acquire the public admiration? or do they seem to imagine, that to them, as to other men, it must be the purchase either of sweat or of blood? By what important accomplishments is the young nobleman instructed to support the dignity of his rank, and to render himself worthy of that superiority over his fellow citizens, to which the virtue of his ancestors had raised them? Is it by knowledge, by industry, by patience, by self-denial, or by virtue of any kind? As all his words, as all his motions are attended to, he learns an habitual regard for every circumstance of ordinary behaviour, and studies to perform all those small duties with the most exact propriety. As he is conscious how much he is observed, and how much mankind are disposed to favour all his inclinations, he acts, upon the most indifferent occasions, with that freedom and elevation which the thought of this naturally inspires. His air, his manner, his deportment all mark that elegant and graceful sense of his own superiority, which those who are born to an inferior station can hardly ever arrive at. These are the arts by which he proposes to make mankind more easily submit to his authority, and to govern their inclinations according to his own pleasure: and in this he is seldom disappointed. These arts, supported by rank and pre-eminence, are, upon ordinary occasions, sufficient to govern the world. Lewis XIV. during the greater part of his reign, was regarded, not only in France, but over all Europe, as the most perfect model of a great prince. But what were the talents and virtues, by which he acquired this great reputation? Was it by the scrupulous and inflexible justice of all his undertakings, by the immense dangers and difficulties with which they were attended, or by the unwearied and unrelenting application with which he pursued them? Was it by his extensive knowledge, by his exquisite judgment, or by his heroic valour? It was by none of these qualities. But he was, first of all, the most powerful prince in Europe, and consequently held the highest rank among kings; and then, says his historian, 'he surpassed all his courtiers in the

gracefulness of his shape, and the majestic beauty of his features. The sound of his voice noble and affecting, gained those hearts which his presence intimidated. He had a step and a deportment, which could suit only him and his rank, and which would have been ridiculous in any other person. The embarrassment which he occasioned to those who spoke to him, flattered that secret satisfaction with which he felt his own superiority.' These frivolous accomplishments, supported by his rank, and, no doubt, too, by a degree of other talents and virtues, which seems, however, not to have been much above mediocrity, established this prince in the esteem of his own age, and have drawn even from posterity, a good deal of respect for his memory. Compared with these, in his own times, and in his own presence, no other virtue, it seems, appeared to have any merit. Knowledge, industry, valour, and beneficence, trembling, were abashed, and lost all dignity before them."

Woman, also, thus "in herself complete," by possessing all these FRIVOLOUS accomplishments, so changes the nature of things,

--"That what she wills to do or say  
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best;  
All higher knowledge in HER PRESENCE falls  
Degraded. Wisdom in discourse with her  
Loses discountenanc'd, and like folly shows;  
Authority and reason on her wait."--

And all this is built on her loveliness!

In the middle rank of life, to continue the comparison, men, in their youth, are prepared for professions, and marriage is not considered as the grand feature in their lives; whilst women, on the contrary, have no other scheme to sharpen their faculties. It is not business, extensive plans, or any of the excursive flights of ambition, that engross their attention; no, their thoughts are not employed in rearing such noble structures. To rise in the world, and have the liberty of running from pleasure to pleasure, they must marry advantageously, and to this object their time is sacrificed, and their persons often legally prostituted. A man, when he enters any profession, has his eye steadily fixed on some future advantage (and the mind gains great strength by having all its efforts directed to one point) and, full of his business, pleasure is considered as mere relaxation; whilst women seek for pleasure as the main purpose of existence. In fact, from the education which they receive from society, the love of pleasure may be said to govern them all; but does this prove that there is a sex

in souls? It would be just as rational to declare, that the courtiers in France, when a destructive system of despotism had formed their character, were not men, because liberty, virtue, and humanity, were sacrificed to pleasure and vanity. Fatal passions, which have ever domineered over the WHOLE race!

The same love of pleasure, fostered by the whole tendency of their education, gives a trifling turn to the conduct of women in most circumstances: for instance, they are ever anxious about secondary things; and on the watch for adventures, instead of being occupied by duties.

A man, when he undertakes a journey, has, in general the end in view; a woman thinks more of the incidental occurrences, the strange things that may possibly occur on the road; the impression that she may make on her fellow travellers; and, above all, she is anxiously intent on the care of the finery that she carries with her, which is more than ever a part of herself, when going to figure on a new scene; when, to use an apt French turn of expression, she is going to produce a sensation. Can dignity of mind exist with such trivial cares?

In short, women, in general, as well as the rich of both sexes, have acquired all the follies and vices of civilization, and missed the useful fruit. It is not necessary for me always to premise, that I speak of the condition of the whole sex, leaving exceptions out of the question. Their senses are inflamed, and their understandings neglected; consequently they become the prey of their senses, delicately termed sensibility, and are blown about by every momentary gust of feeling. They are, therefore, in a much worse condition than they would be in, were they in a state nearer to nature. Ever restless and anxious, their over exercised sensibility not only renders them uncomfortable themselves, but troublesome, to use a soft phrase, to others. All their thoughts turn on things calculated to excite emotion; and, feeling, when they should reason, their conduct is unstable, and their opinions are wavering, not the wavering produced by deliberation or progressive views, but by contradictory emotions. By fits and starts they are warm in many pursuits; yet this warmth, never concentrated into perseverance, soon exhausts itself; exhaled by its own heat, or meeting with some other fleeting passion, to which reason has never given any specific gravity, neutrality ensues. Miserable, indeed, must be that being whose cultivation of mind has only tended to inflame its passions! A distinction should be made between inflaming and strengthening them. The passions thus pampered, whilst the judgment is left unformed, what can be

expected to ensue? Undoubtedly, a mixture of madness and folly!

This observation should not be confined to the FAIR sex; however, at present, I only mean to apply it to them.

Novels, music, poetry and gallantry, all tend to make women the creatures of sensation, and their character is thus formed during the time they are acquiring accomplishments, the only improvement they are excited, by their station in society, to acquire. This overstretched sensibility naturally relaxes the other powers of the mind, and prevents intellect from attaining that sovereignty which it ought to attain, to render a rational creature useful to others, and content with its own station; for the exercise of the understanding, as life advances, is the only method pointed out by nature to calm the passions.

Satiety has a very different effect, and I have often been forcibly struck by an emphatical description of damnation, when the spirit is represented as continually hovering with abortive eagerness round the defiled body, unable to enjoy any thing without the organs of sense. Yet, to their senses, are women made slaves, because it is by their sensibility that they obtain present power.

And will moralists pretend to assert, that this is the condition in which one half of the human race should be encouraged to remain with listless inactivity and stupid acquiescence? Kind instructors! what were we created for? To remain, it may be said, innocent; they mean in a state of childhood. We might as well never have been born, unless it were necessary that we should be created to enable man to acquire the noble privilege of reason, the power of discerning good from evil, whilst we lie down in the dust from whence we were taken, never to rise again.

It would be an endless task to trace the variety of meannesses, cares, and sorrows, into which women are plunged by the prevailing opinion, that they were created rather to feel than reason, and that all the power they obtain, must be obtained by their charms and weakness;

"Fine by defect, and amiably weak!"

And, made by this amiable weakness entirely dependent, excepting what they gain by illicit sway, on man, not only for protection, but advice, is it surprising that, neglecting the duties that reason alone points out, and shrinking from trials calculated to strengthen their minds, they only exert themselves to give their

defects a graceful covering, which may serve to heighten their charms in the eye of the voluptuary, though it sink them below the scale of moral excellence?

Fragile in every sense of the word, they are obliged to look up to man for every comfort. In the most trifling dangers they cling to their support, with parasitical tenacity, piteously demanding succour; and their NATURAL protector extends his arm, or lifts up his voice, to guard the lovely trembler--from what? Perhaps the frown of an old cow, or the jump of a mouse; a rat, would be a serious danger. In the name of reason, and even common sense, what can save such beings from contempt; even though they be soft and fair?

These fears, when not affected, may be very pretty; but they shew a degree of imbecility, that degrades a rational creature in a way women are not aware of--for love and esteem are very distinct things.

I am fully persuaded, that we should hear of none of these infantine airs, if girls were allowed to take sufficient exercise and not confined in close rooms till their muscles are relaxed and their powers of digestion destroyed. To carry the remark still further, if fear in girls, instead of being cherished, perhaps, created, were treated in the same manner as cowardice in boys, we should quickly see women with more dignified aspects. It is true, they could not then with equal propriety be termed the sweet flowers that smile in the walk of man; but they would be more respectable members of society, and discharge the important duties of life by the light of their own reason. "Educate women like men," says Rousseau, "and the more they resemble our sex the less power will they have over us." This is the very point I aim at. I do not wish them to have power over men; but over themselves.

In the same strain have I heard men argue against instructing the poor; for many are the forms that aristocracy assumes. "Teach them to read and write," say they, "and you take them out of the station assigned them by nature." An eloquent Frenchman, has answered them; I will borrow his sentiments. But they know not, when they make man a brute, that they may expect every instant to see him transformed into a ferocious beast. Without knowledge there can be no morality!

Ignorance is a frail base for virtue! Yet, that it is the condition for which woman was organized, has been insisted upon by the writers who have most vehemently argued in favour of the

superiority of man; a superiority not in degree, but essence; though, to soften the argument, they have laboured to prove, with chivalrous generosity, that the sexes ought not to be compared; man was made to reason, woman to feel: and that together, flesh and spirit, they make the most perfect whole, by blending happily reason and sensibility into one character.

And what is sensibility? "Quickness of sensation; quickness of perception; delicacy." Thus is it defined by Dr. Johnson; and the definition gives me no other idea than of the most exquisitely polished instinct. I discern not a trace of the image of God in either sensation or matter. Refined seventy times seven, they are still material; intellect dwells not there; nor will fire ever make lead gold!

I come round to my old argument; if woman be allowed to have an immortal soul, she must have as the employment of life, an understanding to improve. And when, to render the present state more complete, though every thing proves it to be but a fraction of a mighty sum, she is incited by present gratification to forget her grand destination. Nature is counteracted, or she was born only to procreate and rot. Or, granting brutes, of every description, a soul, though not a reasonable one, the exercise of instinct and sensibility may be the step, which they are to take, in this life, towards the attainment of reason in the next; so that through all eternity they will lag behind man, who, why we cannot tell, had the power given him of attaining reason in his first mode of existence.

When I treat of the peculiar duties of women, as I should treat of the peculiar duties of a citizen or father, it will be found that I do not mean to insinuate, that they should be taken out of their families, speaking of the majority. "He that hath wife and children," says Lord Bacon, "hath given hostages to fortune; for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief. Certainly the best works, and of greatest merit for the public, have proceeded from the unmarried or childless men." I say the same of women. But, the welfare of society is not built on extraordinary exertions; and were it more reasonably organized, there would be still less need of great abilities, or heroic virtues. In the regulation of a family, in the education of children, understanding, in an unsophisticated sense, is particularly required: strength both of body and mind; yet the men who, by their writings, have most earnestly laboured to domesticate women, have endeavoured by arguments dictated by a gross appetite, that satiety had rendered fastidious, to weaken their bodies and cramp their minds. But, if even by these sinister methods they

really PERSUADED women, by working on their feelings, to stay at home, and fulfil the duties of a mother and mistress of a family, I should cautiously oppose opinions that led women to right conduct, by prevailing on them to make the discharge of a duty the business of life, though reason were insulted. Yet, and I appeal to experience, if by neglecting the understanding they are as much, nay, more attached from these domestic duties, than they could be by the most serious intellectual pursuit, though it may be observed, that the mass of mankind will never vigorously pursue an intellectual object, I may be allowed to infer, that reason is absolutely necessary to enable a woman to perform any duty properly, and I must again repeat, that sensibility is not reason.

The comparison with the rich still occurs to me; for, when men neglect the duties of humanity, women will do the same; a common stream hurries them both along with thoughtless celerity. Riches and honours prevent a man from enlarging his understanding, and enervate all his powers, by reversing the order of nature, which has ever made true pleasure the reward of labour. Pleasure--enervating pleasure is, likewise, within woman's reach without earning it. But, till hereditary possessions are spread abroad, how can we expect men to be proud of virtue? And, till they are, women will govern them by the most direct means, neglecting their dull domestic duties, to catch the pleasure that is on the wing of time.

"The power of women," says some author, "is her sensibility;" and men not aware of the consequence, do all they can to make this power swallow up every other. Those who constantly employ their sensibility will have most: for example; poets, painters, and composers. Yet, when the sensibility is thus increased at the expense of reason, and even the imagination, why do philosophical men complain of their fickleness? The sexual attention of man particularly acts on female sensibility, and this sympathy has been exercised from their youth up. A husband cannot long pay those attentions with the passion necessary to excite lively emotions, and the heart, accustomed to lively emotions, turns to a new lover, or pines in secret, the prey of virtue or prudence. I mean when the heart has really been rendered susceptible, and the taste formed; for I am apt to conclude, from what I have seen in fashionable life, that vanity is oftener fostered than sensibility by the mode of education, and the intercourse between the sexes, which I have reprobated; and that coquetry more frequently proceeds from vanity than from that inconstancy, which overstrained sensibility naturally produces.



Another argument that has had a great weight with me, must, I think, have some force with every considerate benevolent heart. Girls, who have been thus weakly educated, are often cruelly left by their parents without any provision; and, of course, are dependent on, not only the reason, but the bounty of their brothers. These brothers are, to view the fairest side of the question, good sort of men, and give as a favour, what children of the same parents had an equal right to. In this equivocal humiliating situation, a docile female may remain some time, with a tolerable degree of comfort. But, when the brother marries, a probable circumstance, from being considered as the mistress of the family, she is viewed with averted looks as an intruder, an unnecessary burden on the benevolence of the master of the house, and his new partner.

Who can recount the misery, which many unfortunate beings, whose minds and bodies are equally weak, suffer in such situations--unable to work and ashamed to beg? The wife, a cold-hearted, narrow-minded woman, and this is not an unfair supposition; for the present mode of education does not tend to enlarge the heart any more than the understanding, is jealous of the little kindness which her husband shows to his relations; and her sensibility not rising to humanity, she is displeased at seeing the property of HER children lavished on an helpless sister.

These are matters of fact, which have come under my eye again and again. The consequence is obvious, the wife has recourse to cunning to undermine the habitual affection, which she is afraid openly to oppose; and neither tears nor caresses are spared till the spy is worked out of her home, and thrown on the world, unprepared for its difficulties; or sent, as a great effort of generosity, or from some regard to propriety, with a small stipend, and an uncultivated mind into joyless solitude.

These two women may be much upon a par, with respect to reason and humanity; and changing situations, might have acted just the same selfish part; but had they been differently educated, the case would also have been very different. The wife would not have had that sensibility, of which self is the centre, and reason might have taught her not to expect, and not even to be flattered by the affection of her husband, if it led him to violate prior duties. She would wish not to love him, merely because he loved her, but on account of his virtues; and the sister might have been able to struggle for herself, instead of eating the bitter bread of dependence.

I am, indeed, persuaded that the heart, as well as the understanding, is opened by cultivation; and by, which may not appear so clear, strengthening the organs; I am not now talking of momentary flashes of sensibility, but of affections. And, perhaps, in the education of both sexes, the most difficult task is so to adjust instruction as not to narrow the understanding, whilst the heart is warmed by the generous juices of spring, just raised by the electric fermentation of the season; nor to dry up the feelings by employing the mind in investigations remote from life.

With respect to women, when they receive a careful education, they are either made fine ladies, brimful of sensibility, and teeming with capricious fancies; or mere notable women. The latter are often friendly, honest creatures, and have a shrewd kind of good sense joined with worldly prudence, that often render them more useful members of society than the fine sentimental lady, though they possess neither greatness of mind nor taste. The intellectual world is shut against them; take them out of their family or neighbourhood, and they stand still; the mind finding no employment, for literature affords a fund of amusement, which they have never sought to relish, but frequently to despise. The sentiments and taste of more cultivated minds appear ridiculous, even in those whom chance and family connexions have led them to love; but in mere acquaintance they think it all affectation.

A man of sense can only love such a woman on account of her sex, and respect her, because she is a trusty servant. He lets her, to preserve his own peace, scold the servants, and go to church in clothes made of the very best materials. A man of her own size of understanding would, probably, not agree so well with her; for he might wish to encroach on her prerogative, and manage some domestic concerns himself. Yet women, whose minds are not enlarged by cultivation, or the natural selfishness of sensibility expanded by reflection, are very unfit to manage a family; for by an undue stretch of power, they are always tyrannizing to support a superiority that only rests on the arbitrary distinction of fortune. The evil is sometimes more serious, and domestics are deprived of innocent indulgences, and made to work beyond their strength, in order to enable the notable woman to keep a better table, and outshine her neighbours in finery and parade. If she attend to her children, it is, in general, to dress them in a costly manner--and, whether, this attention arises from vanity or fondness, it is equally pernicious.

Besides, how many women of this description pass their days, or, at least their evenings, discontentedly. Their husbands acknowledge

that they are good managers, and chaste wives; but leave home to seek for more agreeable, may I be allowed to use a significant French word, piquant society; and the patient drudge, who fulfils her task, like a blind horse in a mill, is defrauded of her just reward; for the wages due to her are the caresses of her husband; and women who have so few resources in themselves, do not very patiently bear this privation of a natural right.

A fine lady, on the contrary, has been taught to look down with contempt on the vulgar employments of life; though she has only been incited to acquire accomplishments that rise a degree above sense; for even corporeal accomplishments cannot be acquired with any degree of precision, unless the understanding has been strengthened by exercise. Without a foundation of principles taste is superficial; and grace must arise from something deeper than imitation. The imagination, however, is heated, and the feelings rendered fastidious, if not sophisticated; or, a counterpoise of judgment is not acquired, when the heart still remains artless, though it becomes too tender.

These women are often amiable; and their hearts are really more sensible to general benevolence, more alive to the sentiments that civilize life, than the square elbowed family drudge; but, wanting a due proportion of reflection and self-government, they only inspire love; and are the mistresses of their husbands, whilst they have any hold on their affections; and the platonic friends of his male acquaintance. These are the fair defects in nature; the women who appear to be created not to enjoy the fellowship of man, but to save him from sinking into absolute brutality, by rubbing off the rough angles of his character; and by playful dalliance to give some dignity to the appetite that draws him to them. Gracious Creator of the whole human race! hast thou created such a being as woman, who can trace thy wisdom in thy works, and feel that thou alone art by thy nature, exalted above her--for no better purpose? Can she believe that she was only made to submit to man her equal; a being, who, like her, was sent into the world to acquire virtue? Can she consent to be occupied merely to please him; merely to adorn the earth, when her soul is capable of rising to thee? And can she rest supinely dependent on man for reason, when she ought to mount with him the arduous steeps of knowledge?

Yet, if love be the supreme good, let women be only educated to inspire it, and let every charm be polished to intoxicate the senses; but, if they are moral beings, let them have a chance to become intelligent; and let love to man be only a part of that glowing flame of universal love, which, after encircling humanity,

mounts in grateful incense to God.

To fulfil domestic duties much resolution is necessary, and a serious kind of perseverance that requires a more firm support than emotions, however lively and true to nature. To give an example of order, the soul of virtue, some austerity of behaviour must be adopted, scarcely to be expected from a being who, from its infancy, has been made the weathercock of its own sensations. Whoever rationally means to be useful, must have a plan of conduct; and, in the discharge of the simplest duty, we are often obliged to act contrary to the present impulse of tenderness or compassion. Severity is frequently the most certain, as well as the most sublime proof of affection; and the want of this power over the feelings, and of that lofty, dignified affection, which makes a person prefer the future good of the beloved object to a present gratification, is the reason why so many fond mothers spoil their children, and has made it questionable, whether negligence or indulgence is most hurtful: but I am inclined to think, that the latter has done most harm.

Mankind seem to agree, that children should be left under the management of women during their childhood. Now, from all the observation that I have been able to make, women of sensibility are the most unfit for this task, because they will infallibly, carried away by their feelings, spoil a child's temper. The management of the temper, the first and most important branch of education, requires the sober steady eye of reason; a plan of conduct equally distant from tyranny and indulgence; yet these are the extremes that people of sensibility alternately fall into; always shooting beyond the mark. I have followed this train of reasoning much further, till I have concluded, that a person of genius is the most improper person to be employed in education, public or private. Minds of this rare species see things too much in masses, and seldom, if ever, have a good temper. That habitual cheerfulness, termed good humour, is, perhaps, as seldom united with great mental powers, as with strong feelings. And those people who follow, with interest and admiration, the flights of genius; or, with cooler approbation suck in the instruction, which has been elaborately prepared for them by the profound thinker, ought not to be disgusted, if they find the former choleric, and the latter morose; because liveliness of fancy, and a tenacious comprehension of mind, are scarcely compatible with that pliant urbanity which leads a man, at least to bend to the opinions and prejudices of others, instead of roughly confronting them.

But, treating of education or manners, minds of a superior class

are not to be considered, they may be left to chance; it is the multitude, with moderate abilities, who call for instruction, and catch the colour of the atmosphere they breathe. This respectable concourse, I contend, men and women, should not have their sensations heightened in the hot-bed of luxurious indolence, at the expence of their understanding; for, unless there be a ballast of understanding, they will never become either virtuous or free: an aristocracy, founded on property, or sterling talents, will ever sweep before it, the alternately timid and ferocious slaves of feeling.

Numberless are the arguments, to take another view of the subject, brought forward with a show of reason; because supposed to be deduced from nature, that men have used morally and physically to degrade the sex. I must notice a few.

The female understanding has often been spoken of with contempt, as arriving sooner at maturity than the male. I shall not answer this argument by alluding to the early proofs of reason, as well as genius, in Cowley, Milton, and Pope, (Many other names might be added.) but only appeal to experience to decide whether young men, who are early introduced into company (and examples now abound) do not acquire the same precocity. So notorious is this fact, that the bare mentioning of it must bring before people, who at all mix in the world, the idea of a number of swaggering apes of men whose understandings are narrowed by being brought into the society of men when they ought to have been spinning a top or twirling a hoop.

It has also been asserted, by some naturalists, that men do not attain their full growth and strength till thirty; but that women arrive at maturity by twenty. I apprehend that they reason on false ground, led astray by the male prejudice, which deems beauty the perfection of woman--mere beauty of features and complexion, the vulgar acceptation of the world, whilst male beauty is allowed to have some connexion with the mind. Strength of body, and that character of countenance, which the French term a physionomie, women do not acquire before thirty, any more than men. The little artless tricks of children, it is true, are particularly pleasing and attractive; yet, when the pretty freshness of youth is worn off, these artless graces become studied airs, and disgust every person of taste. In the countenance of girls we only look for vivacity and bashful modesty; but, the springtide of life over, we look for soberer sense in the face, and for traces of passion, instead of the dimples of animal spirits; expecting to see individuality of character, the only fastener of the affections. We then wish to converse, not to fondle; to give scope to our

imaginations, as well as to the sensations of our hearts.

At twenty the beauty of both sexes is equal; but the libertinism of man leads him to make the distinction, and superannuated coquettes are commonly of the same opinion; for when they can no longer inspire love, they pay for the vigour and vivacity of youth. The French who admit more of mind into their notions of beauty, give the preference to women of thirty. I mean to say, that they allow women to be in their most perfect state, when vivacity gives place to reason, and to that majestic seriousness of character, which marks maturity; or, the resting point. In youth, till twenty the body shoots out; till thirty the solids are attaining a degree of density; and the flexible muscles, growing daily more rigid, give character to the countenance; that is, they trace the operations of the mind with the iron pen of fate, and tell us not only what powers are within, but how they have been employed.

It is proper to observe, that animals who arrive slowly at maturity, are the longest lived, and of the noblest species. Men cannot, however, claim any natural superiority from the grandeur of longevity; for in this respect nature has not distinguished the male.

Polygamy is another physical degradation; and a plausible argument for a custom, that blasts every domestic virtue, is drawn from the well-attested fact, that in the countries where it is established, more females are born than males. This appears to be an indication of nature, and to nature apparently reasonable speculations must yield. A further conclusion obviously presents itself; if polygamy be necessary, woman must be inferior to man, and made for him.

With respect to the formation of the foetus in the womb, we are very ignorant; but it appears to me probable, that an accidental physical cause may account for this phenomenon, and prove it not to be a law of nature. I have met with some pertinent observations on the subject in Forster's Account of the Isles of the South Sea, that will explain my meaning. After observing that of the two sexes amongst animals, the most vigorous and hottest constitution always prevails, and produces its kind; he adds,--"If this be applied to the inhabitants of Africa, it is evident that the men there, accustomed to polygamy, are enervated by the use of so many women, and therefore less vigorous; the women on the contrary, are of a hotter constitution, not only on account of their more irritable nerves, more sensitive organization, and more lively fancy; but likewise because they are deprived in their matrimony of that share of physical love which in a monogamous condition, would

all be theirs; and thus for the above reasons, the generality of children are born females."

"In the greater part of Europe it has been proved by the most accurate lists of mortality, that the proportion of men to women is nearly equal, or, if any difference takes place, the males born are more numerous, in the proportion of 105 to 100."

The necessity of polygamy, therefore, does not appear; yet when a man seduces a woman, it should I think, be termed a LEFT-HANDED marriage, and the man should be LEGALLY obliged to maintain the woman and her children, unless adultery, a natural divorcement, abrogated the law. And this law should remain in force as long as the weakness of women caused the word seduction to be used as an excuse for their frailty and want of principle; nay, while they depend on man for a subsistence, instead of earning it by the exercise of their own hands or heads. But these women should not in the full meaning of the relationship, be termed wives, or the very purpose of marriage would be subverted, and all those endearing charities that flow from personal fidelity, and give a sanctity to the tie, when neither love nor friendship unites the hearts, would melt into selfishness. The woman who is faithful to the father of her children demands respect, and should not be treated like a prostitute; though I readily grant, that if it be necessary for a man and woman to live together in order to bring up their offspring, nature never intended that a man should have more than one wife.

Still, highly as I respect marriage, as the foundation of almost every social virtue, I cannot avoid feeling the most lively compassion for those unfortunate females who are broken off from society, and by one error torn from all those affections and relationships that improve the heart and mind. It does not frequently even deserve the name of error; for many innocent girls become the dupes of a sincere affectionate heart, and still more are, as it may emphatically be termed, RUINED before they know the difference between virtue and vice: and thus prepared by their education for infamy, they become infamous. Asylums and Magdalens are not the proper remedies for these abuses. It is justice, not charity, that is wanting in the world!

A woman who has lost her honour, imagines that she cannot fall lower, and as for recovering her former station, it is impossible; no exertion can wash this stain away. Losing thus every spur, and having no other means of support, prostitution becomes her only refuge, and the character is quickly depraved by circumstances over

which the poor wretch has little power, unless she possesses an uncommon portion of sense and loftiness of spirit. Necessity never makes prostitution the business of men's lives; though numberless are the women who are thus rendered systematically vicious. This, however, arises, in a great degree, from the state of idleness in which women are educated, who are always taught to look up to man for a maintenance, and to consider their persons as the proper return for his exertions to support them. Meretricious airs, and the whole science of wantonness, has then a more powerful stimulus than either appetite or vanity; and this remark gives force to the prevailing opinion, that with chastity all is lost that is respectable in woman. Her character depends on the observance of one virtue, though the only passion fostered in her heart--is love. Nay the honour of a woman is not made even to depend on her will.

When Richardson makes Clarissa tell Lovelace that he had robbed her of her honour, he must have had strange notions of honour and virtue. For, miserable beyond all names of misery is the condition of a being, who could be degraded without its own consent! This excess of strictness I have heard vindicated as a salutary error. I shall answer in the words of Leibnitz--"Errors are often useful; but it is commonly to remedy other errors."

Most of the evils of life arise from a desire of present enjoyment that outruns itself. The obedience required of women in the marriage state, comes under this description; the mind, naturally weakened by depending on authority, never exerts its own powers, and the obedient wife is thus rendered a weak indolent mother. Or, supposing that this is not always the consequence, a future state of existence is scarcely taken into the reckoning when only negative virtues are cultivated. For in treating of morals, particularly when women are alluded to, writers have too often considered virtue in a very limited sense, and made the foundation of it SOLELY worldly utility; nay, a still more fragile base has been given to this stupendous fabric, and the wayward fluctuating feelings of men have been made the standard of virtue. Yes, virtue as well as religion, has been subjected to the decisions of taste.

It would almost provoke a smile of contempt, if the vain absurdities of man did not strike us on all sides, to observe, how eager men are to degrade the sex from whom they pretend to receive the chief pleasure of life; and I have frequently, with full conviction, retorted Pope's sarcasm on them; or, to speak explicitly, it has appeared to me applicable to the whole human race. A love of pleasure or sway seems to divide mankind, and the husband who lords it in his little harem, thinks only of his



pleasure or his convenience. To such lengths, indeed, does an intemperate love of pleasure carry some prudent men, or worn out libertines, who marry to have a safe companion, that they seduce their own wives. Hymen banishes modesty, and chaste love takes its flight.

Love, considered as an animal appetite, cannot long feed on itself without expiring. And this extinction, in its own flame, may be termed the violent death of love. But the wife who has thus been rendered licentious, will probably endeavour to fill the void left by the loss of her husband's attentions; for she cannot contentedly become merely an upper servant after having been treated like a goddess. She is still handsome, and, instead of transferring her fondness to her children, she only dreams of enjoying the sunshine of life. Besides, there are many husbands so devoid of sense and parental affection, that during the first effervescence of voluptuous fondness, they refuse to let their wives suckle their children. They are only to dress and live to please them: and love, even innocent love, soon sinks into lasciviousness when the exercise of a duty is sacrificed to its indulgence.

Personal attachment is a very happy foundation for friendship; yet, when even two virtuous young people marry, it would, perhaps, be happy if some circumstance checked their passion; if the recollection of some prior attachment, or disappointed affection, made it on one side, at least, rather a match founded on esteem. In that case they would look beyond the present moment, and try to render the whole of life respectable, by forming a plan to regulate a friendship which only death ought to dissolve.

Friendship is a serious affection; the most sublime of all affections, because it is founded on principle, and cemented by time. The very reverse may be said of love. In a great degree, love and friendship cannot subsist in the same bosom; even when inspired by different objects they weaken or destroy each other, and for the same object can only be felt in succession. The vain fears and fond jealousies, the winds which fan the flame of love, when judiciously or artfully tempered, are both incompatible with the tender confidence and sincere respect of friendship.

Love, such as the glowing pen of genius has traced, exists not on earth, or only resides in those exalted, fervid imaginations that have sketched such dangerous pictures. Dangerous, because they not only afford a plausible excuse to the voluptuary, who disguises sheer sensuality under a sentimental veil; but as they spread affectation, and take from the dignity of virtue. Virtue, as the

very word imports, should have an appearance of seriousness, if not austerity; and to endeavour to trick her out in the garb of pleasure, because the epithet has been used as another name for beauty, is to exalt her on a quicksand; a most insidious attempt to hasten her fall by apparent respect. Virtue, and pleasure are not, in fact, so nearly allied in this life as some eloquent writers have laboured to prove. Pleasure prepares the fading wreath, and mixes the intoxicating cup; but the fruit which virtue gives, is the recompence of toil: and, gradually seen as it ripens, only affords calm satisfaction; nay, appearing to be the result of the natural tendency of things, it is scarcely observed. Bread, the common food of life, seldom thought of as a blessing, supports the constitution, and preserves health; still feasts delight the heart of man, though disease and even death lurk in the cup or dainty that elevates the spirits or tickles the palate. The lively heated imagination in the same style, draws the picture of love, as it draws every other picture, with those glowing colours, which the daring hand will steal from the rainbow that is directed by a mind, condemned, in a world like this, to prove its noble origin, by panting after unattainable perfection; ever pursuing what it acknowledges to be a fleeting dream. An imagination of this vigorous cast can give existence to insubstantial forms, and stability to the shadowy reveries which the mind naturally falls into when realities are found vapid. It can then depict love with celestial charms, and dote on the grand ideal object; it can imagine a degree of mutual affection that shall refine the soul, and not expire when it has served as a "scale to heavenly;" and, like devotion, make it absorb every meaner affection and desire. In each other's arms, as in a temple, with its summit lost in the clouds, the world is to be shut out, and every thought and wish, that do not nurture pure affection and permanent virtue. Permanent virtue! alas! Rousseau, respectable visionary! thy paradise would soon be violated by the entrance of some unexpected guest. Like Milton's, it would only contain angels, or men sunk below the dignity of rational creatures. Happiness is not material, it cannot be seen or felt! Yet the eager pursuit of the good which every one shapes to his own fancy, proclaims man the lord of this lower world, and to be an intelligential creature, who is not to receive, but acquire happiness. They, therefore, who complain of the delusions of passion, do not recollect that they are exclaiming against a strong proof of the immortality of the soul.

But, leaving superior minds to correct themselves, and pay dearly for their experience, it is necessary to observe, that it is not against strong, persevering passions; but romantic, wavering feelings, that I wish to guard the female heart by exercising the

understanding; for these paradisiacal reveries are oftener the effect of idleness than of a lively fancy.

Women have seldom sufficient serious employment to silence their feelings; a round of little cares, or vain pursuits, frittering away all strength of mind and organs, they become naturally only objects of sense. In short, the whole tenor of female education (the education of society) tends to render the best disposed, romantic and inconstant; and the remainder vain and mean. In the present state of society, this evil can scarcely be remedied, I am afraid, in the slightest degree; should a more laudable ambition ever gain ground, they may be brought nearer to nature and reason, and become more virtuous and useful as they grow more respectable.

But I will venture to assert, that their reason will never acquire sufficient strength to enable it to regulate their conduct, whilst the making an appearance in the world is the first wish of the majority of mankind. To this weak wish the natural affections and the most useful virtues are sacrificed. Girls marry merely to BETTER THEMSELVES, to borrow a significant vulgar phrase, and have such perfect power over their hearts as not to permit themselves to FALL IN LOVE till a man with a superior fortune offers. On this subject I mean to enlarge in a future chapter; it is only necessary to drop a hint at present, because women are so often degraded by suffering the selfish prudence of age to chill the ardour of youth.

>From the same source flows an opinion that young girls ought to dedicate great part of their time to needle work; yet, this employment contracts their faculties more than any other that could have been chosen for them, by confining their thoughts to their persons. Men order their clothes to be made, and have done with the subject; women make their own clothes, necessary or ornamental, and are continually talking about them; and their thoughts follow their hands. It is not indeed the making of necessaries that weakens the mind; but the frippery of dress. For when a woman in the lower rank of life makes her husband's and children's clothes, she does her duty, this is part of her business; but when women work only to dress better than they could otherwise afford, it is worse than sheer loss of time. To render the poor virtuous, they must be employed, and women in the middle rank of life did they not ape the fashions of the nobility, without catching their ease, might employ them, whilst they themselves managed their families, instructed their children, and exercised their own minds. Gardening, experimental philosophy, and literature, would afford them subjects to think of, and matter for conversation, that in some degree would exercise their understandings. The conversation

of French women, who are not so rigidly nailed to their chairs, to twist lappets, and knot ribbands, is frequently superficial; but, I contend, that it is not half so insipid as that of those English women, whose time is spent in making caps, bonnets, and the whole mischief of trimmings, not to mention shopping, bargain-hunting, etc. etc.: and it is the decent, prudent women, who are most degraded by these practices; for their motive is simply vanity. The wanton, who exercises her taste to render her person alluring, has something more in view.

These observations all branch out of a general one, which I have before made, and which cannot be too often insisted upon, for, speaking of men, women, or professions, it will be found, that the employment of the thoughts shapes the character both generally and individually. The thoughts of women ever hover around their persons, and is it surprising that their persons are reckoned most valuable? Yet some degree of liberty of mind is necessary even to form the person; and this may be one reason why some gentle wives have so few attractions beside that of sex. Add to this, sedentary employments render the majority of women sickly, and false notions of female excellence make them proud of this delicacy, though it be another fetter, that by calling the attention continually to the body, cramps the activity of the mind.

Women of quality seldom do any of the manual part of their dress, consequently only their taste is exercised, and they acquire, by thinking less of the finery, when the business of their toilet is over, that ease, which seldom appears in the deportment of women, who dress merely for the sake of dressing. In fact, the observation with respect to the middle rank, the one in which talents thrive best, extends not to women; for those of the superior class, by catching, at least a smattering of literature, and conversing more with men, on general topics, acquire more knowledge than the women who ape their fashions and faults without sharing their advantages. With respect to virtue, to use the word in a comprehensive sense, I have seen most in low life. Many poor women maintain their children by the sweat of their brow, and keep together families that the vices of the fathers would have scattered abroad; but gentlewomen are too indolent to be actively virtuous, and are softened rather than refined by civilization. Indeed the good sense which I have met with among the poor women who have had few advantages of education, and yet have acted heroically, strongly confirmed me in the opinion, that trifling employments have rendered women a trifler. Men, taking her ('I take her body,' says Ranger.) body, the mind is left to rust; so that while physical love enervates man, as being his favourite

recreation, he will endeavour to enslave woman: and who can tell how many generations may be necessary to give vigour to the virtue and talents of the freed posterity of abject slaves? ('Supposing that women are voluntary slaves--slavery of any kind is unfavourable to human happiness and improvement.'--'Knox's Essays'.)

In tracing the causes that in my opinion, have degraded woman, I have confined my observations to such as universally act upon the morals and manners of the whole sex, and to me it appears clear, that they all spring from want of understanding. Whether this arises from a physical or accidental weakness of faculties, time alone can determine; for I shall not lay any great stress upon the example of a few women (Sappho, Eloisa, Mrs. Macaulay, the Empress of Russia, Madame d'Eon, etc. These, and many more, may be reckoned exceptions; and, are not all heroes, as well as heroines, exceptions to general rules? I wish to see women neither heroines nor brutes; but reasonable creatures.) who, from having received a masculine education, have acquired courage and resolution; I only contend that the men who have been placed in similar situations have acquired a similar character, I speak of bodies of men, and that men of genius and talents have started out of a class, in which women have never yet been placed.